PICKANINNY

BY

ESTELLE MARGARET SWEARINGEN

With an Introduction by

RUTH COMFORT MITCHELL

and Illustrations by

E. W. KEMBLE

DUFFIELD & COMPANY

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ESTELLE M. SWEARINGEN

"It gives me great pleasure to say that I have read 'Pickaninny' and that I enjoyed it very much indeed. It is a story which I think will appeal to children, and at the same time teach them to be tolerant of those of other races of less fortunate circumstances. It is an interesting story with a well pointed moral for the conditions of our present day life. It has all the fascination of a fairy tale, and teachers who have read or told it to their pupils tell me that the children are very enthusiastic over it."

MARGARET G. HYATT,
Deputy Supt. Public Instruction,
Sacramento, Calif.

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April 2
1920

To Phil Miller,

old friend & true

with golden

memories and

high hope for

his future

Cordially,

the Author

Estelle Swearingen

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NEW YORK
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TO MY LITTLE SON

DeLONG RENÉ MURRAY

MOTHER

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FOREWORD

It seems to me that Estelle Margaret Swearingen has done more, in this slim little book, than merely to tell a lively tale to children. In this story of PICKANINNY, and in the other stories which are to follow it, she has struck a clear note of brotherhood and internationalism, and she has done it, not with the pompous blast of propaganda, but with the merry tinkle of whimsy and charm.

We are deeply concerned, in these days, with the problem and the task of Americanization, with fitting the alien into his new background, but we must not forget the equal importance of making that background a sympathetic and understanding one. And we can do this, because it must be seen, in the last analysis, not in terms of tenements and trolleys and elevators and school rules and city ordinances, but of flesh and blood,—of human contacts.

In this, as in almost every movement, every

reform, every forward step, we must begin with the children. The herd instinct is strong in them; the instinctive dislike and distrust for the thing that is different and strange; the wish to be all of a pattern; but there is likewise, happily, the warm sympathy, the quick chivalry, waiting only the kindling touch of the imagination.

A teacher, reading an earlier edition of PICKANINNY to her class, tells that the solitary little negro in her room came to her desk one day with signs of conflict upon him, "Say, ma'am," he said urgently, "I des' wish yo' all'd read dat nigger story once mo'! Dey's pickin' on me ergin!"

When the stories of the Mexican, the Japanese, the Irish, the German child, and other small aliens have been published and placed in the schools, Estelle Margaret Swearingen will not only have helped to entertain children and rendered a real service to teachers, to which vital profession she herself belongs; she will, in addition, have done her generous share toward the shaping of the child thought of her country in the direction of world brotherhood.

She will have done her part in wiping out fixed and bitter boundary lines, in convincing children that they are brothers and sisters under the skin, whether they live on a pink spot on the map or a yellow spot. . .

For it is only through education that their steps can be guided on the safe and sane and sure road which leads to the outlawry of war, —St. Paul's preparedness—

—*"and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."*

RUTH COMFORT MITCHELL

PICKANINNY

PICKANINNY

THE HUNTED BLACKLING

"Nigger! Nigger!"

"Blackberry!"

"Kinky-headed coon!"

"Stove polish!"

Pickaninny's heart gave a great thump and then stood still. Were they all going after him again? He hung his curly head and walked away, pretending not to hear them, but the teasing boys followed him, yelling and pointing at him and making faces.

Pickaninny looked with terror at the fast gathering crowd. Yes; it was going to be one of those bad times for him. He didn't dare to run away; they would have liked nothing better than a good chase, and there many of them and only one of him, and his little black legs were short. He squared his thin shoul-

ders and faced them as bravely as he could when he was so badly frightened.

"Coon! Coon!"

"Nigger-nigger, never die!
Black face an' Chniny-eye!"

"Fie, fie, fie for shame!
Everybody knows your name—
Pickaninny! Black baby!"

"Shame! Shame! Shame!"

Slowly and cautiously, keeping his eyes on the sea of jeering faces and mocking fingers, he edged backward, and slowly and steadily the crowd surged forward.

If only Pickaninny had remembered about that stone wall! But he forgot how near it was until he had bumped into it, and then it was too late. He braced his back against it and held his thin little black claws in front of his face, and the children struck at him with fists and sticks and threw stones, and pulled his kinky curls till the hot tears smarted in his eyes.

(They would never have been so cruel and heartless, you know, if they'd had fathers and mothers, as most of us have, to teach them to

be friendly and kind, but their parents were dead, and they lived in a big, gray, gloomy building called THE ORPHANS' HOME. The Matron and the nurses did the very best they could, but they were too busy to watch them all the time. Pickaninny was the only colored child there, and he always said, when he got into trouble—and he was in trouble most of the time—"Dey picks on me kaze I'se black!")

Now he faced his tormentors and sobbed—"I des' wish yo'-all lemme erlone! I nebber done nuffin' ter nobuddy! I kaint help bein' black!"

"Aw, then why don't you go where the other niggers are?" one urchin yelled.

"Go find a blackberry patch!"

"Go find a load of coal!"

"Coon! Coon! Nigger, nigger! Stove polish!"

They came crowding closer and closer until it seemed to Pickaninny that he could not breathe,—that he would be crushed to death against the hard cement wall. Then, suddenly, the biggest boy of all, who was a bully, gave him a stinging slap on the face.

Now Pickaninny was only a forlorn little darky boy, friendless and alone, and his father had been a poor and unfortunate negro, ignorant and aimless, and his grandfather had been a slave on a cotton plantation, but his three or four times *great*-grandfather had been a black chief in an African jungle, fearless and free, so there was fighting blood in his veins, and he gave that big bully of a boy such a punch that he nearly fell over backward.

"Fight! Fight!" yelled the children, and one of the attendants came running out and separated them and marched the two fighters into the Matron's office where they were punished and sent to bed without dinner.

But the Matron was a kind woman, and after the big house was quiet for the night she carried some bread and milk up to Pickaninny.

"I don' want nuffin ter eat," he wailed. "I des' wants to go erway where all de chillens is black lak me!"

"There, there, you mustn't cry! Eat your supper and go to sleep, and to-morrow you must be a good boy and not fight," the Matron

patted him and went away, but down stairs she shook her head and sighed. "It *is* a shame," she said to the Nurse. "The poor little fellow ought to be with his own people. I must really talk to the Board about it."

Pickaninny fell asleep after a while, but all night long he dreamed of taunting faces and jeering voices and mocking fingers, and it kept ringing in his ears—"Why don't you go where the other niggers are?" And when he awakened, *very* early next morning, before it was light, the first thing that popped into his head was—"Why don't you go where the other niggers are?"

He sat up in bed and a look of desperate determination came into his small face. "I'se gwine!" he whispered to himself. He slipped out of bed and dressed as quickly and quietly as he could, and tiptoed past the long rows of beds where the white children lay peacefully sleeping, and out into the big, silent, empty hall. He hesitated, for it was early dawn, and the hall was dim and full of shadows which seemed to move as he looked at them. But he marched on, his thin little legs trembling, until he came to the front door.

It would not open!

Pickaninny's heart stood still. "What is I gwine ter do?" he thought frantically. He heard a noise, and he flew back to the Dormitory in terror and jumped into bed with all his clothes on and covered up his head, and lay there, shaking and shivering. But everything was quiet again and presently his courage came back and he sat up and looked about him.

The window nearest him was wide open!

"Oh, golly, but dis am luck!" he told himself, climbing stealthily out onto the porch. There were no stairs, but there were pillars with strong old vines twining round them, and he managed to clamber down, tearing his clothes and scratching his face and hands on the sharp thorns. But, just as he reached the ground, he knocked over a tin pail which happened to be standing there, and it rolled over and over and down the steps and along the graveled walk,—"Bim,—bom! Bim—bom!" (You know the kind of a noise a tin pail can make!)—and Pickaninny almost died of fright right then and there as he flew down

HE WAS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LONGEST HILL
HE HAD EVER SEEN IN HIS LIFE

the path and crawled under the gate and ran out into the road.

He didn't know where he was going, but he took the first turn and the first path leading away from that, and ran and ran and *ran,* faster and faster, until all his breath was gone and his heart was beating like a trip hammer, and he fell down, too exhausted to move.

But after a very few minutes he scrambled to his feet again and looked fearfully about him. He was at the bottom of the longest, steepest hill he had ever seen in all his life.

"I don' kyar," he told himself doggedly. "I'se gwine clar to de top 'fore I stops ergin!" And he drew a deep breath and squared his thin little shoulders, and set his weary legs to the stiff climb.

THE LITTLE BLACK STRANGER

'Way up on the top of a tall, lonely hill lived a little brother and sister, and they didn't have any other boys and girls for playmates. One day, when they were sitting on the back steps together, the sister, whose name was Bess, said wearily, "Oh, Jack, what shall we play? Let's try to think up something new!"

"Aw, there's nothing new to play," Jack growled crossly. "Besides, I'm sick and tired of playing with *you*!"

"You aren't any *tireder* of playing with me than I am of playing with you, Jack Gray," she answered hotly, throwing a handful of his best marbles down the walk. "And I just won't ever speak to you again,—you'll see!"

"Don't care if you don't," her brother sneered. "Girls are no good. They don't know how to play."

Bess opened her mouth to say something rude in reply, but remembered just in time

that she wasn't ever going to speak to him again, so she shut her lips as hard and tight as a trap and tossed her head instead. There wasn't a sound save the tiny noise one marble made which hadn't stopped rolling. They sat there in silence, like a boy and girl carved out of wood, and they were just as miserable as they could be.

Then, all at once, they heard the pitter-patter of small feet hurrying nearer and nearer, and the next moment the gate was pushed open and a little colored boy, breathless and gasping, staggered in.

"Ooh. . .ooh!" whispered Bess. "Look at that little black boy!"

He had lost his shoes, and his old brown trousers were torn away up above his scratched and bleeding knees, and his worn little shirt was *nearly* as full of holes as a sieve, and on his head was a funny big straw hat which completely covered his small black face.

"Hello!" said Jack, staring. "Who are you?"

"I'se Pickaninny," said the stranger, shyly.

"Pickaninny? That's a queer name!"

"Well, hit's des' de onliest name I got," he said, apologetically.

"But—where did you come from?" Bess wanted to know.

"I comes frum de Orphans' Home. I done runned erway, an' I ain' nebber gwine back no mo'!" Pickaninny said stoutly. "Dey picks on me kaze I'se black. Dey calls me 'Nigger' an' 'Coon' an' 'Lump er coal' an' 'Stove polish' twel I gets so mad I fights, an' den dey all piles on me an' beats me, an' firs' thing I knows, I gits walloped an' sent ter baid wiffout nuffin ter eat!"

"Oh, you *poor* thing," said Bess, pitifully.

"Gee whiz, that's pretty tough luck!" Even Jack was sympathetic.

"Dey hates me, kaze I'se black, but I kaint help dat. An' I reckon yo'-all gwine hate me, too," he finished, wistfully.

"No, we won't, either!" said both children, heartily and at once. "We'll *like* you if you'll stay here and play with us," the sister added. "Wait,—I'll call Mama!"

But while she was speaking her mother had stepped out on the porch and was staring in surprise at the unexpected guest. When she

had heard his story she smiled at him in the kindest way and said, "You must come in the house and have a bath, and I'll find some outgrown clothes of Jack's for you to wear, and then you must have something to eat!"

Pickaninny's eyes rolled with rapture until only the whites of them showed. "Lady," he said softly, "if dis am er dream, please don' pinch me, kaze I don' *wanter* wake up!"

Mrs. Gray smiled again when Pickaninny said that, and led him into the house, and in a very few minutes he was clean and comfortable in the best clothes he had ever worn in his life, and trying hard not to gobble when she set before him a tall glass of rich, creamy milk and a plate of big, puffy ginger cookies with fat, juicy raisins and great strings of cocoanut all inside and out. He just squealed with delight.

"Lady," he said solemnly, when he had finished the last drop and the last crumb, "I cert'ny does feel ter gratitude yo'!"

"Come, children," said Mrs. Gray, still smiling, (it seemed to Pickaninny that he had never seen a person who smiled so much and it made him feel warm and cozy inside!) "let's

all go out in the yard. I'll sit under the tree with my sewing and watch you while you play."

"Now, what can we play?" asked Bess hopefully, looking at the newcomer.

"Why, mercy on us, chillen," he answered, "dere's mo'n er milyun games we kin play!—Dis fine big yard, des' fo' us three—"

"But that's just it—we can't have any fun with only *three!* If there were lots of other boys and girls to play with, we could have a good time," sighed Bess.

"Huc 'cum yo' talk dat-er-way?" said Pickaninny indignantly. "Yo' des bet *I* don' wish dere was lots er chillens stid er three! Wy, dere's no room, an' none ob dem wants to play de same thing at de same time, an' den dey busts out er fightin',—*I* knows! No, sir! Yo' hyar me shout! Three is de lucky number, an' all de bes' games is fo' three!"

"Oh, Pic, tell us about 'em!" cried Bess.

"Well," said Pickaninny, "dere's De Jailman; das' er grandillious game fo' three."

"The Jailman," Jack repeated curiously. "I never heard of it. How do you play it?"

"Well," said the little black boy eagerly,

"hit's dis-er-way. All de dry leaves an' sticks an' ol' papers an' rubbish is de *robbers*. We-all's de policemens, an' we runs roun' de yard, fas' ez we kin, an' picks dem all up. De one dat gits de biggest heap is De Jailman. Den de odder two policemen, dey has to put all dere robbers in his jail, an' De Jailman gits er match an' sets fire to de heap! Hit's mo' fun dan er mule kin pull in er waggin to be De Jailman, kaze he's de onliest one dat kin set fire to it!"

The Gray children were delighted with the new game and started out at once. Jack dashed around so fast it seemed certain that he must win, but he was careless, and dropped some of his sticks and papers in his rush. Bess was more careful and she might have won if it had not been for the swiftness of Pickaninny. His heap was by far the highest, so Jack and Bess had to pile their trash on top of his, and it all made a glorious pile. It looked really like a young hill.

"Jailman! Lady, I'se De Jailman!" called Pickaninny proudly, and Mrs. Gray gave him a match.

"You dear children," she said, "you've cleaned my yard beautifully!"

It made a splendid blaze and the three children danced about it in great glee, and they were still capering and shouting when Mr. Gray came home, and they had to go in and get ready for dinner.

Mr. Gray stared at Pickaninny, and when Mrs. Gray told him all about him he shook his head. "We ought to notify the Orphans' Home immediately," he said.

"Oh, Henry," his wife pleaded, "do let the poor little fellow stay a few days! He was so miserable there, and he's so happy here, and he's as good as gold, and so helpful, and the children love him."

"Well. . ." said Mr. Gray, and he shook his head again. (He shook his head just as often as Mrs. Gray smiled.)

After dinner Jack and Bess and Pickaninny played games and had a wonderful time, and it seemed only a few minutes until the mother was saying—"Bedtime, children!"

"Aw, wait a minute," growled Jack, and went on playing.

"What ails yo'-all?" demanded Pickaninny,

shocked. "Look to me lak you' mighty onpoliteful, when yo' Mammy so good to yo' all de day long! *I'se* ready!" He jumped up and ran to Mrs. Gray, and that made the others ashamed, and they followed quickly.

There was a warm little room just off the kitchen with a soft little bed with lots and lots of cozy covers for Pickaninny, and when Mrs. Gray came to tuck him in and put out the light she saw two big shiny tears rolling down his black cheeks.

"Lady," he said earnestly, "is yo' any relation to Gawd?"

"Why, Pickaninny, what an idea!" She smiled an even *smilier* smile than usual.

"Seem lak yo' des *bleege* ter be, kaze yo' so *good!*" he whispered, and then he snuggled down in the wooley blankets and went to sleep.

Next morning, when Pickaninny woke up, he looked about him in amazement, and for a minute he couldn't think where he was. Then it all came back to him, and he sat up in bed, grinning happily.

"Hit's no dream," he said, blissfully. "Hit am sho' nuff real!"

When Mrs. Gray came to awaken him she found him nearly dressed.

"Well, you smart little fellow," she laughed. "I'm afraid you're going to beat Jack at getting up in the morning!" Just then Pickaninny heard Mr. Gray's voice calling the children, rather crossly, and he heard Jack, on the floor above, bounding out of bed and hurrying to find his clothes. (He didn't know, you see, that Jack had been spanked by his father many times because he was so lazy and slow in the mornings!)

Mr. Gray was very much surprised when

he saw how nicely the children had cleaned up the yard, and he decided to let Pickaninny stay a little longer. He gave Bess and Jack twenty-five cents a piece and a dime to Pickaninny.

The little black boy's eyes rolled with delight. "Hit's de onliest cash money I ebber had in my life long!" he gasped, and Mrs. Gray thought that was so pitiful that later, after Mr. Gray had gone to work, she took Pickaninny in her room and opened her pretty purse and gave him *fifty cents* to keep for his very own, and Pickaninny was so happy he could only gasp and stammer and wink the tears away.

All morning the children were so good and helpful under Pickaninny's leadership that Mrs. Gray said they should have a tea-party for a reward, and she made cocoa and cookies and candy for them.

Pickaninny was wild with delight when Bess set her cunning little table under the big tree. "Lawsy, lawsy, white chillens," he chuckled, "dis am' Thanksgiben an' Chris'-mus rolled inter one! I'se gwine eat twel I splits!"

When they had finished up all the good things Pickaninny spied a funny big cap of purple and green with yellow bows on it, hanging on the line in the next yard. "My lan' ob Goshen, what am dat?" he stared.

"Oh, that's Old Lady Grimes' night-cap," said Jack, dropping his voice to a whisper. "She hangs it out every morning and takes it in just before dark."

"She's *crazy,*" Bess told Pickaninny in an even softer whisper, keeping her eyes fearfully on the house next door. "My Papa says she ought to be taken away to the Asylum."

Pickaninny's eyes were sparkling with mischief. You see, he had never in all his life had such a good time and so much good food, and he was full to the brim and running over with high spirits.

"She certainly does love that old cap," Jack went on. "You should see how carefully she takes it down every night."

At that, Pickaninny began to squeal with laughter.

"What's the matter?" Bess wanted to know.

He only giggled and chuckled the more. Now, Pickaninny had forgotten to say his

prayers that morning and to ask for help to be a good boy all day long, and perhaps that accounts for the naughty idea which had popped into his kinky black head. "Les' gib dat ol' crazy lady er s'prise," he said. "I reckon she won' take hit off'n de line so keerful dis time! Hi, Jack, les' you'n me find er big fat frog!" He rushed away, laughing, with Jack at his heels.

Bess sat very still. She was afraid of Old Lady Grimes but she was still *more* afraid of creepy, crawly things like frogs and snails and snakes.

The boys had no difficulty in finding a frog, but the problem was how to get it into the night cap. Pickaninny boldly offered to climb over the fence and drop it in himself. "Oh, golly, I des' wish we had er big long garter snake!" he giggled.

"I saw one the other day, down by the ditch," said Jack. "Come on,—maybe we can find him!"

Bess trembled with fear at the very mention of the word, but she didn't say anything. She hadn't been Jack's sister seven years for nothing.

It took them longer, this time, and it was almost dark when they came back, and Bess shuddered when she saw the long coiling snake the black boy was carrying by the tail.

"We-all had er tir'ble time cotchin' dis feller," he announced proudly. "Dey ain' hard ter kill, but dey's po'ful hard to cotch erlive!" He started for the fence.

"I'll hold 'em while you climb over," offered Jack, taking the squirming frog in one hand and the wrigging, twisting snake in the other.

"Oh, boys, look out! She'll see you!" gasped Bess.

"Kaint see me kaze I'se black," chuckled Pickaninny. He climbed quickly over the fence and took the captives from Jack and dropped them carefully into the cap and pulled the edges together to hold them in, and then he scrambled over again and returned to Jack and Bess and the three naughty children crouched down behind a thick bush and waited for the old woman to come and get her cap.

They waited and waited and *waited,* and no sign of Old Lady Grimes. "What if Mama

HE DROPPED THE CAPTIVES CAREFULLY INTO THE CAP

calls us in to dinner before she comes?" Bess said, anxiously.

"Aw, shut up!" snapped Jack who was afraid of that very thing himself.

"Look!" whispered Pickaninny. "Somebuddy in de do'way now!"

"Oooh. . .she's coming!" breathed Bess, snuggling closer to her brother.

"Lawsy, Lawsy, what a tir'ble face she don' got!" Pickaninny shivered.

Old Lady Grimes walked straight to the line and started to take down her purple and green night cap with the yellow bows on it when out shot the snake and up hopped the frog, right in her face. She gave a long, shrill, piercing scream which was enough to make a person's blood run cold, and dashed into her house, banging and bolting the door.

The children laughed so loud and heartily that they did not hear the door open and stealthy footsteps creeping back again. Quick as a flash the old woman was upon them.

"So, you good-for-nothing little rascal, *you* did it!" She shook her fist at Jack.

"Oh, no he didn't," stammered Bess. "I—

we all—we didn't mean any harm. It was just—" she swallowed—"just—a joke—"

"A joke indeed," snorted Old Lady Grimes. "I'll teach you and your brat of a brother a lesson you won't soon forget!" She started to climb over the fence, making horrible noises of rage.

Then Pickaninny did a very brave thing. He stood up straight and squared his thin little shoulders and said—"Dey didn' do nuffin', lady! I'se de one dat done hit!"

She peered at him through the gathering dusk. "You!" she snarled. "You little black fiend! Before another sun sets I'll make you wish you'd never been born!" She rushed into the house again, muttering furiously to herself.

The three children stood as if turned to stone, staring at each other, afraid to move or speak.

Then Mrs. Gray's bright and cheery voice sounded from the porch. "Dinner's ready, kiddies! Hurry in!"

Pickaninny dropped his head in shame. "Lawsy, I'se a good-fo'-nuffin' sinner," he

wailed. "Yo' Mammy so good'n kine' to me, —an' now what she gwine think er me?"

"Aw, how's she going to know anything about it?" Jack snapped.

Pickaninny shook his head. " 'Pears to me lak we bleege ter tell her."

"Aw, what's the use?" Jack protested. "Dad 'd give us a licking! You just keep your mouth shut, or it'll be worse for you!"

"Yes, Pickaninny," urged Bess, "we mustn't tell! Let's just forget all about it!"

They all ran indoors, but Pickaninny couldn't forget so easily. His conscience ached like a tooth, and he couldn't eat any supper, and Mrs. Gray thought he must be sick, and smiled at him even more than usual, and tucked him up early in his comfortable bed. That made him more ashamed than ever, and after she had gone he pulled the covers over his head and cried himself to sleep.

He had dreadful dreams about squirming frogs and wriggling snakes and ugly, frightful faces all mixed up together, but his dreams were not nearly as dreadful as the thing which was to happen to him next day. The old

crazy woman next door sat up all night, plotting and planning a way to get Pickaninny into her house without anyone's knowing it. When the sun rose the little black boy lay peacefully sleeping, tired out by his nightmares, but a pair of wildly gleaming, bloodshot eyes watched him wrathfully through the window.

WHERE'S PICKANINNY?

The sun was shining when Pickaninny jumped out of bed, and it was such a cheerful morning that he felt better, in spite of himself, and decided not to worry any more about the night cap. He made up his mind, however, not to get into any more mischief, but to help Mrs. Gray all he possibly could.

He was delighted when Mrs. Gray gave him some money and asked him to run down the hill to the grocery store and buy a sack of sugar for her. "It's Jack's birthday," she whispered, "and I'm going to make him a wonderful Birthday Cake with nuts and raisins in it and frosting and pink candles on it!"

Pickaninny was almost too excited to eat the delicious breakfast she served him, but not quite. He planned to buy a fine birthday present for Jack with the fifty cents Mrs. Gray had given him the morning before, and he was very proud to think that she had

trusted him to buy the sugar out of a five dollar bill and bring the change safely back to her.

"Hurry, Pic'," she said, giving him a little pat and a push, and smiling her very nicest smile. "I want to bake my cake as soon as I can!"

He started down the hill on a trot, and he didn't look behind, so he didn't see the furious face of Old Lady Grimes peering out from behind a big bush, where she had been watching and listening, and little dreamed that she was rushing down the hill by a much shorter path than the one he was taking.

"I sho'ly does feel moughty biggity an' uppity wif all dis cash money in my han'!" Pickaninny reflected proudly. "Look lak dat Gray lady cert'ny do trus' me! An' I'se gwine be de bes' black boy in de worl', I is!" he promised himself, gratefully, and began to plan what he would buy for Jack with his fifty cents.

"I reckon he bleege ter lak er kite," he considered. "Er mebbe er baseball, er—"

At a turn in the path, where another path ran into it, Old Lady Grimes, breathless from

her haste, her face red and her eyes flashing, was waiting to pounce upon him.

Pickaninny stood still. His knees shook so that he couldn't stir a step, and his heart thumped so that he couldn't make a sound; the only motion visible about him was his wildly rolling eyes. "Lawsy, Lawsy, I'se er gone coon!" he told himself.

The old woman, looking exactly like a wicked witch in a fairy tale, clapped her cold old claw over his mouth, picked him up with surprising strength, and hobbled with him up the hill.

The little black boy fought and struggled with all his might but she held him with a grip of steel, and she dragged him down into her dark, damp, clammy cellar, and tied his hands behind his back and put a gag in his mouth so he couldn't scream, and fastened him to a stout iron pipe.

"There, now, you little black imp," she snarled, "I'll give you time to think up some new pranks to play on a poor old woman!"

She hobbled up the stairs and he heard her draw the bolt.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Gray had been so busy

making lemon pies and wonderful tarts with big lumps of bright red jelly in them that she did not notice how long her errand boy had been gone, but when she was ready to make her cake she began to wonder what made him so slow. "If he doesn't come soon, I won't have time to make the Birthday Cake," she worried.

Jack and Bess kept running in from the yard to ask their mother where Pickaninny was. They missed him as much as if they had always had him for a playmate!

"He is doing an errand for me," she told them every time, but when Mr. Gray came home and asked about him he could see that she was anxious.

"Did you give him any money?" Mr. Gray wanted to know.

"Yes," she admitted. "I gave him five dollars. He was to buy me a sack of sugar and bring back the change."

"Aha!" said Mr. Gray, shaking his head.

"Oh, Henry, I don't believe the child would steal," Mrs. Gray protested.

"Then, where *is* he?" her husband wanted to know.

The children came in and heard them talking and Bess began to cry, and even Jack had to swallow hard and wink to keep the tears back.

"Pic 'll be back and bring every cent," he said stoutly. "He wouldn't take it! He's—he's *good!* He's better than I am!" he gulped. "If anything's happened to Pic I don't *want* any Birthday Cake, so there!" He stamped his foot and ran out of the house, and Bess followed him, crying bitterly.

Of course Mr. Gray went down to the grocery and bought some flour and asked the grocer if he had seen a little colored boy that morning, and when the man said he had not, he came slowly up the hill, shaking his head more dolefully than ever.

"Let this be a lesson to us," he said solemnly.

Mrs. Gray made the cake and frosted it and put on the pink candles and they had the birthday dinner at night instead of at noon, but Bess and Jack could hardly eat a bite of any of the good things, they were so unhappy, and Jack would hardly look at his toys and games and books.

"Come, come," said Mrs. Gray, brightly, though her smile was only a poor imitation of her regular one, "we must forget all sad things on a birthday, and be gay and glad!" She sat down on the floor with her children and made them try one of the funny new games, and was so merry herself that she soon had them laughing a little, but try as they would, they couldn't forget the little black face which had shone with such pitiful joy and gratitude, and when the brother and sister went to bed they tossed and turned for a long while, and even after they fell asleep they kept murmuring—"Where is Pickaninny?"

And after Mrs. Gray had gone down stairs and seated herself across the table from her husband with a pile of stockings to mend, she found her thoughts straying again and again to the little black waif.

"Oh, Henry," she said after a long silence, with tears in her kind eyes, "*where* do you suppose Pickaninny is?"

But Mr. Gray merely shook his head.

IN THE CELLAR

Pickaninny was helpless. His hands were tied behind his back, so he couldn't free himself, and there was a gag in his mouth so he couldn't scream. But he could think, and his thoughts were full of terror and misery.

He was scared almost out of his wits because he was in the power of the dreadful old woman, and he was heart broken when he remembered Jack's birthday party and the errand on which he had been sent, and how kind Mrs. Gray had told him to hurry back, and how—this was the bitterest thought of all—she had trusted him with five dollars!

"Oh, Lawsy, Lawsy, she des' boun' ter think I don' stole hit," he told himself, and it seemed as if his heart would burst with shame and unhappiness. He struggled wildly to work his hands free from the cord that bound them, and tried with all his might to shout, but all the sound he could possibly make was

a smothered moan, and at last, exhausted by his vain efforts, he fell down in a little heap on the floor and sobbed and sobbed.

Suddenly he stopped crying for he heard steps on the stairs, and held his breath. Old Lady Grimes was coming down again! Pickaninny shivered and his heart pounded so madly that he could hardly breathe. Now she was unlocking the door. . .now she was hobbling swiftly across the cellar floor. . .

When she was close enough for him to see through the dim light he discovered that she was carrying a big, long horse whip.

"Now," she said, with something between a snarl and a chuckle, "I'll make you pay for putting frogs and snakes in my nightcap!"—and she began to lash him cruelly.

Pickaninny moaned with pain, and dodged this way and that, trying to escape the blows she showered upon him.

"Ho, ho! Aha! You can dance, can you?" Old Lady Grimes grinned at him horribly. "Well, then, we'll see if you can sing!" She jerked the gag out of his mouth and untied his hands, and continued to beat him, taking a fiendish delight in his tears and his wails and

his pitiful efforts to keep out of the range of the lash.

At last he held up his poor little bleeding hands, cut by the whip, and pleaded between his sobs,—"Oh, Lady, Lady, please, *pretty*—please lemme go! I'se sorry! Fo' de Lawd, I swar I'se sorry an' I won' nebber do hit ergin! Please lemme go!"

That made her laugh as if at a very funny joke. "Let you go? Yes, when I'm good and ready. And then I'll take you back to the Orphans' Home where you belong!"

"Oh, Lady, Lady!" His knees shook under him and his mouth was so dry he could hardly speak. "*Don'* take me back to dat awful, awful place! No, no, *no*!" He was so frantic that he rushed to her and fell on his knees and clutched at her skirts, jibbering with pain and terror.

Old Lady Grimes gave him such a push that he toppled over backwards and struck his head on the stone floor, and did not move again. She watched him for a moment, muttering to herself, and then she gave him a kick. "Get up, you little black fiend! Get up, I say!" When she saw that he was un-

conscious she was really frightened because she thought he was dead, and even though she was crazy she realized what that would mean for her. She grabbed him up roughly and splashed cold water over him, and finally he opened his eyes, but when he saw the ugly face bending over him he shut them again and shivered.

"Here, you! Wake up!" she snarled, giving him a shake and a cuff. "Try to fool me, would you?"

When she found he was too weak and terrified to stand she let him lie down on a pile of old gunny sacks and said she would bring him a cup of water and a crust of stale bread.

Pickaninny shook his head. "I'se not hongry," he said in a small, faint voice. "I don' want nuffin ter eat. I reckon I'se gwine die, Lady. I des' wish yo'-all would take dis five dollars back ter Mrs. Gray, kaze she des' pintly bleege ter think I stole hit! Dat's de onliest thing I wants in dis worl!" He held out the five dollar bill, the big tears rolling down his cheeks.

"Aha! Aho! That'll just pay for your board and lodging!" squealed the old woman,

snatching it away from him and stuffing it into the pocket of her petticoat. "You're not going to die, you little fool! But maybe you'll wish you could before I'm done with you!" She hobbled away, laughing that terrible laugh of hers, across the cellar floor, up the stairs, and banged and bolted the door.

"Oh, good Lawd, sabe me!" moaned Pickaninny.

Old Lady Grimes did not come back, and all through the long night the little black boy was alone in the cold damp cellar, sick, and feverish, and beside himself with misery and fear.

THE RESCUE

Both Jack and Bess had bad dreams that night, and they wakened early.

"Oh, dear," sighed Bess, "I hoped it was just a night mare that Pickaninny had run away and taken Mama's money, but it's true!"

"It's true, all right, that he's gone," said Jack, stoutly, "but I'll never believe that he stole that five dollars."

"Neither will I," said Bess, her faith in the lost playmate coming back again. "Oh, Jack, wasn't he fun to play with? He knew so many games! Now we'll be lonesome again, and fight, and hate each other!"

"I dreamed about him all night," said Jack. "I thought I heard him crying."

"Why, so did I," Bess stared at him. "I dreamed that very same thing! It was so real I even heard it when I woke up!"

"So did I!" Jack nodded his head. "It almost seems as if I could still—sh. . *.listen!*"

His eyes opened very wide and he fairly held his breath. "Bess! Do you hear anything?"

"I *do*!" she said in an excited whisper. "I do hear somebody crying! Oh, let's call Mama!"

They raced out, half dressed, to find their mother, who was cooking breakfast while Mr. Gray read the morning paper and shook his head over all the bad news he found in it. He was the sort of person who always found bad news!

Mr. and Mrs. Gray followed the children back to the room where they had heard the strange sound and after listening a moment in silence the mother nodded excitedly.

"Yes, I do believe it's poor little Pickaninny! He's sorry for running away, and he's come back, but he's afraid to come in! Come, we'll find him, and tell him how glad we are!" She looked at her husband. "Of course, Henry, we'll take him in again, and forgive him!"

Mr. Gray cleared his throat and coughed a little. "Er—ahum!" he said. "Let us see first whether he has brought back the money."

The whole family ran out of doors and

hunted high and low, but there was no sign of a little black boy, although they could still hear the muffled sobbing.

Suddenly Jack and Bess looked at each other and their faces got very red. "Old Lady Grimes!" they gasped with one breath.

"Why, what do you mean?" asked their mother.

Then they told all about the prank they had played with the nightcap, and how the crazy woman had threatened Pickaninny.

"Oh, the poor child," cried Mrs. Gray! "Come, Henry, we must get him away from her at once!"

Mr. Gray shook his head. "Yes, but remember that he is in great danger," he reminded her. "If we attempt to break into the house the old witch may do him an injury."

"I never thought of that," his wife confessed. "Oh, I have an idea! You know, Old Lady Grimes is scared to death of fire! Let's shout and scream and rush out, pretending our house is on fire, and when she comes out to see, we can slip in and find Pickaninny!"

Mr. Gray wasn't very sure the scheme would work but Mrs. Gray insisted on trying

it. "Look," she whispered, "there she is now, peeping through the curtains!"

"All right! Come on!" her husband shouted, and led the way to the kitchen. Then there arose such a clash and clamor, such a banging of tin pans, such yelling and shrieking as Old Lady Grimes had never heard.

She opened the door a crack and stuck her ugly old head out, one hand cupped behind her ear, listening. Just then all the Grays dashed out of doors screaming—"Fire! *Fire!* FIRE!"—and the crazy old creature shot out into the yard like a flash!

The very instant her back was turned Mr. and Mrs. Gray slipped into the house and ran from room to room, calling "Pickaninny! Oh, Pickaninny! Pic! Where are you?" But there was no answer.

"Listen," breathed Mrs. Gray. "I still hear it"

"The cellar!" shouted Mr. Gray, dashing down the hall, his wife at his heels.

They could distinctly hear the groans. "Oh, poor little Pic, we're coming!" Mrs. Gray called encouragingly.

But the cellar door was locked, with key as well as bolt, and the key was not there.

"Oh, Henry, what shall we do?" wailed Mrs. Gray. "She'll be here any minute—or she may attack our children! How shall we open it?"

"This way," said Mr. Gray, grimly, snatching up an ax that stood by, and smashing in a hole in the door big enough for them to crawl through, and in another moment they were bending over the little moaning heap that was Pickaninny.

"Quick,—open the cellar window!" shouted Mr. Gray, lifting the black boy in his arms.

Mrs. Gray flew to obey him, unlocked and lifted the window and helped her husband to carry Pickaninny through.

"There, there, you poor child," she comforted him. "You're safe with us again!"

"Oh, Lady, Lady," Pickaninny whispered hoarsely, "I nebber stole yo' money! Dat ole witch woman, she don' grab hit erway! I ask her, politeful, ter take dat cash money back to yo' all, kaze you' gwine think I'se er onery, no-count rapscallion, but she say she gwine

keep hit fo' my bo'd bill!" He began to sob, weakly, at the memory.

Mrs. Gray was smiling more wonderfully than he had ever seen her smile but there were bright tears shining in her eyes. *"There,* Henry!" she said triumphantly to her husband. Pickaninny didn't understand what she meant by that but he did understand that he was forgiven and taken back into his place.

Pickaninny was bathed and fed and tucked up in bed with soft and soothing bandages on his wounds before the old woman dared to enter her house again. She had not seen any flames nor smelt any smoke, and she began to suspect that another trick had been played on her, and she hobbled as fast as she could to the cellar.

When she found that the door had been smashed in, and that her prisoner was gone she flew into such a wild rage that her eyes rolled and there were flecks of foam on her lip, and she tore her hair and her clothing and ran shrieking down the hill.

Mr. Gray put on his hat and strolled down to the village a little later, and when he came back he was looking very cheerful. "Well, my dear," he said to his wife, "we need not

worry about Old Lady Grimes any more! Fortunately, she ran right into a policeman, raving and jibbering, and now she is safely locked up in the State Hospital!"

"Oh, goody, goody!" cried Bess and Jack, and their mother added—"Thank God! Now I can sleep nights without worrying myself sick over the poor old creature! Well, this is surely a happy night for the Gray family,—that pitiful old crazy woman taken away where she can't harm herself or anyone else, and our little friend Pickaninny safe with us again!"

Jack and Bess treated their playmate like a little prince, hovering about his bed, sharing their toys with him and telling him stories while their mother fed him a rich, golden custard with whipped cream on top which she had baked just for him in a round blue bowl.

"Lady an' chillen," said Pickaninny in his high-pitched happy little voice, "I des' *bleege* ter git well in er hustle,—all dese grandillious treatmints yo' all gibbin' me! Mek me feel moughty biggity an' uppity, to-be-sho'ly! An' I cert'ny does feel ter gratitude yo'!"

PICKANINNY IN SCHOOL

Bess and Jack were up bright and early next morning, rushing about excitedly, for it was the first day of school.

"Oh, Mama, don't you think Pic is well enough to go with us?" begged Jack.

"Yes, I'm sure the fresh air would do him good; but he could never go to school in those ragged old clothes, so I'm afraid he'll have to stay at home for the present," said Mrs. Gray, looking closely at her son.

"Aw, let him have my new suit," pleaded Jack. "I can wear my school suit on Sundays!"

That was exactly what Mrs. Gray had been hoping he would say, and it made her very proud and happy to see such unselfishness in her boy. She hurried in to see Pickaninny and asked him how he would like to go to school with Jack and Bess.

Pickaninny rolled his eyes in glee. "Reck-

on dat's er fine idea!" Then his face fell. "But dey gwine be shamed er me in dese scandillious cloze!"

"Come with me," smiled Mrs. Gray. "I have a surprise for you!"

When Pickaninny walked out of Jack's room he looked like a little black prince. His kinky hair had been brushed and oiled till it shone like satin, and he wore a Buster Brown collar and a bright red tie. His little navy blue suit and tan shoes and socks were all new, and to top it off he wore a big checked cap which Jack had given him to make his costume complete, and there never was a prouder boy in all the world.

"Who dat dude nigger boy?" he squealed with delight, catching sight of himself in the mirror. "I nebber see dat coon befo'! Look moughty proud an persnicketty to me!"

"Hurry up," Jack called. "We'll be late!"

They all started off for school and Pickaninny's feet just danced all the way. "What's you' school like?" the stranger wanted to know. "Does dey lambast yo' much?"

"No, indeed," said Bess, indignantly, "our

teacher is so sweet and kind! She never punishes us unless we're *terribly* bad."

"Cert'ny am dif'funt fum de Orphans' Home," chuckled Pickaninny. "Dere dey des' pintedly frail de hide off'n yo'!"

"Run!" shouted Jack. "There's the first bell!" and they flew so fast that they were in the school yard long before the last bell even began to tinkle.

"Whar all de chillen?" Pickaninny stared. "I only sees six or seben!"

"Why, it's a small school," Bess explained. "We never have more than eleven or twelve."

"Dere was mos' er hundred orphans," said Pickaninny.

"Ooh, how nice!" Bess gasped, enviously. "We always love to have new ones come. My, won't the class be excited when they see we've brought a new pupil?"

Sure enough, all the children quickly gathered round the little black stranger with much interest and curiosity and when they found he was such a good friend of Jack and Bess they treated him very kindly.

By the time they went inside Pickaninny was an admired and popular hero, for Jack

had lost no time in telling of his blood-curdling adventure with Old Lady Grimes. The childrens' eyes nearly popped out, they stared at him so, and everybody wanted to walk next to him, and there was such a pushing and shoving and scrambling that Miss Vars, the pretty teacher, had to come and straighten them into line.

After they marched into the school room she made Pickaninny happy by telling him he might sit with Jack at a double desk, and that made Jack very proud and the other boys envious!

Miss Vars was surprised to find Pickaninny such a bright and eager student. He had not been to school very much in his short life but he had a keen, quick brain and he really wanted to learn, and he tried so hard that the teacher praised him more than she praised anybody else in the room that morning.

Jack was so glad about Pickaninny that he set manfully to work himself, and by noon time he had several papers to carry home which would make his mother smile, and keep his father from shaking his head, they were so good!

When recess came the children flocked around Pickaninny and made him tell them over and over again about Old Lady Grimes and show them the cuts, not yet healed, which the cruel whip had made. Then they made him the leader or captain in all their games, and Pickaninny was happier than he had ever been before in all his life. At last the little fellow forgot that he was black. His eyes were rolling and shining when he marched back in the school room, and he studied so well and tried so hard that Miss Vars patted his head and said nice things about him before the whole roomful of children, and she told Jack that he, too, was doing fine work.

So at noon time two very radiant lads, one brown and rosy and the other one black, sat down under a shady tree while Bess opened the lunch which Mrs. Gray had given them.

"Ooh, but it looks good!" Bess said and Jack echoed her satisfaction with "Oh, boy, I'll say it does!" while Pickaninny smacked his lips and chuckled—"Chillen, yo' hyar me shout! I'se gwine eat twel I splits!"

There were big, jolly sandwiches of meat and cheese and egg and jelly, and next came

some of Mrs. Gray's big puffy ginger cookies, and three big bananas, and at the very bottom of the box there were some nuts and raisins. How those children ate! Finally there was only one cooky left and Jack generously offered that one to his new chum.

"Boy," said Pickaninny solemnly, "if'n I eats dat, I'se gwine git de inkompeppy! I'se chuck full, clar up to my quitty-quotty!"

That made them all laugh, and then Jack asked with his mouth full—"Well, how do you like our school now?"

"I don' *like* hit," the little black boy answered, "I des *lubs* hit!"

"I thought you would," Jack nodded, swallowing a big bite. "And I like it myself, now that you're here!"

And just at that moment, when everything was so peaceful and jolly, and Pickaninny had come to think that all his troubles were over, Bess jumped up, crying—"Oh, there's Daisy!"—and ran toward the gate.

There stood a little girl in a stiffly starched white dress, with a dainty white hat to match, and pretty white shoes and socks, and a big box of candy under her arm.

"Who-all's dat?" asked Pickaninny, staring.

"That's Daisy Stevens," Jack explained. "Her father's the richest man in this town or this county, I guess. They live in the biggest house and her mother has three girls to do the house work, and her father has the finest horses you ever saw, and Daisy has one that belongs to her, and she rides it every day! Golly, she has a lot of money to spend! Look at that big box of candy! Come on,—let's get some!"

Now, Daisy Stevens was used to having the children pay her a great deal of attention. She brought all sorts of goodies to school, and her mother had wonderful picnics and parties for her, and sometimes she gave the children rides on her little horse, and so, naturally, they all flocked about her. So they did to-day, but as soon as they had helped themselves to chocolate creams they ran back to Pickaninny. Pickaninny hadn't followed Jack when he went up to Daisy, because he was bashful, so she saw him for the first time when all her playmates deserted her for him.

She stood watching and her nose, which was something of a snub anyway, turned up

still more. "Who's that black nigger boy?" she asked Bess.

"Oh, that's Pickaninny," Bess explained. "He lives at our house and we like him a lot! He knows more games! Come on and play!"

"I don't play with black niggers!" said Daisy, scornfully.

That made Bess stop and stare. Daisy had always been her best friend, and had given her so many good times, and Bess had always followed her lead in everything at school.

"Why—" she began uncertainly, "he's so nice, Daisy, and—and he knows so many things to play—We *like* him, Jack and I do! And so does Mama!"

"Well, I don't," Daisy put her nose still higher in the air. "*I* don't play with black niggers and I don't play with people that *do* play with black niggers, so there!"

She said it so loud that many of the children heard her, and some of them stood still, listening to her.

"Shame, shame!" cried Daisy, shrilly. "Who'd play with a nigger? Coon! Coon! Coon!

The children began to regard Pickaninny

"I DON'T PLAY WITH BLACK NIGGERS," SAID DAISY SCORNFULLY

in a new light. After all, they thought to themselves, he was just a strange little darky who had come tagging along after Jack and Bess, and Daisy Stevens was—well, she was Daisy Stevens, who lived in the biggest house in town and gave the most wonderful parties and had the most money to spend, and a horse of her own to ride. . . Two or three of them stopped playing with Pickaninny, and then four of five of them, and then six or seven. . .

Daisy continued to point at him and laugh and jeer, and even Bess edged a little away from him and a little nearer to Daisy.

Fifteen minutes earlier Pickaninny had been happier than ever before in his life, and now he was more miserable. When the other boys and girls began to call out—"Coon! Blackberry! Nigger, nigger!" it went through him like a knife. Every name they called him hurt him far worse than the blows Old Lady Grimes had struck him.

Jack took one look at Pickaninny's face and then, his eyes blazing with rage and his fists clenched, he stepped up to Daisy and said very loud and clear—"He can't help being black, but you *can* help being so mean and

hateful! And anyhow, I'd rather have a black skin than a—than a *black heart*!"

Daisy slapped him in the face and screamed with temper. "Do you hear that, everybody? Jack Gray wants to be a nigger, too! Nigger, Nigger! Coon! Coon! Coon!"

Miss Vars stepped out of the door at that moment, and she gave Daisy a shake and a scolding, and warned her to let Pickaninny alone.

"Pooh! I don't have to mind her," Daisy sneered, the minute the teacher's back was turned. "I'll tell my Papa on her, and he'll send her away from this school!" And all afternoon she made fun of Pickaninny and urged the others on to make faces at him and tease him cruelly.

Pickaninny's head was hot and his heart ached, and he did not work well. After he had made several careless mistakes Miss Vars lost patience with him and sent him out of the room. Tears blinded him so he could hardly see as he stumbled out into the hall, and going to the very end of it dropped down in the corner, buried his face in his little black hands and sobbed.

"Oh, Lawsy, Lawsy, I des' wish de whole worl' was black stid er white," he choked. "Den I wouldn' be all erlone an' des pintly wishin' I was daid!"

But suddenly, as he crouched there alone and forlorn in a dejected little heap, he caught the sound of strange music in the distance. He lifted his head and listened curiously. Over and over again the gay little tune tinkled, louder and louder, until he was sure it must be just outside. He jumped to his feet and ran out of the building, through the yard, and out of the gate.

Sure enough! There stood an Italian turning the crank of his organ, with a little black monkey perched on his shoulder.

Pickaninny, forgetting his troubles for the moment, gave a little cry of delight, and the monkey heard him and ran over to him, holding out his tiny green hat pleadingly.

Pickaninny grinned and dropped a penny into it. Quick as a flash the little beast pocketed the money, clasped his hat on the side of his head and was at Pickaninny's side, running his little hands through all his pockets

until he found another copper which was the very last cent Pickaninny had.

"Das' de onliest cash money I hab in dis worl'," said Pickaninny, ruefully, "But I reckon yo' kin hab hit, kaze yo' all's black, too," and he slipped his arm around the monkey and gave him a hug, and the queer little animal slid his soft arm about Pickaninny's neck and rested his wise, tiny face against his shoulder.

"What-all's his name?" the boy asked timidly.

"He gotta da nice-a name," answered the man. "I call heem 'Antonio.' "

" 'Antonio,' " repeated Pickaninny softly. "Dat sho' am pretty. Hyar, honey,—does yo' like raisins?" He gave him the few he had kept from his lunch, wrapped up in his handkerchief. The monkey chattered with joy and ate all but one, which he gravely offered to his new friend. Then he ran his hands through the kinky black hair and over his face, patting it softly, jabbering all the while.

A wonderful idea came into Pickaninny's

sore heart. "Say, how much would yo' sell dis animule fo'?"

"You gotta no mon'ee," growled the Italian, suspiciously. "What-a for you ask-a me?" Suddenly he scowled, which made his face very ugly. "You try steel-a heem, I put-a you in-a jail!" He snatched the monkey out of Pickaninny's arms and gave him a cuff which made him whimper, and started to grind out the little tune again, for the children were just marching out of school.

That brought back the memory of all his unhappiness to Pickaninny, and he ran up the hill as fast as he could before any of them could overtake him.

When he was in bed that night he buried his face in the pillow and cried. "I des' hates dat school! I des' wishes I was daid!" he sobbed, forgetting his perfect spelling and arithmetic papers with the bright gold stars pasted at the top of each one, forgetting the little black monkey, Antonio, who had loved him so quickly, forgetting his best friend Jack who had stood by him loyally. He just kept remembering a little girl all in white

who pointed a finger at him and jeered—"Nigger, nigger! Coon! Coon! Coon!"

He feel asleep at last, and the tears dried on his black cheeks, and the bright stars twinkled at him through the window as if to say—"Cheer up, Pickaninny! *We* know a secret about you! We know something *wonderful* that's going to happen to-morrow!"

THE LITTLE GIRL IN WHITE

Pickaninny didn't want to go to school next day but Mrs. Gray told him he must learn to read and write and figure and speak correctly so that he would grow up to be an intelligent man, and she gave him a note for Miss Vars.

"Never mind what those silly children say or do," she said, smiling at him. "Jack and Bess will play with you, and if you study hard your teacher will be your friend."

Miss Vars read the note, and Pickaninny saw her call Daisy Stevens up to the desk and talk very seriously to her, and she did the same thing with several of the boys who had been ringleaders in persecuting the stranger, and when recess time came he was thankful for the great change. The other boys and girls did not play with him, but at least they let him alone, and did not tease or torment him, and he and Jack played marbles and

spun their tops contentedly by themselves. Bess divided her time between them and Daisy, and honestly did her best to make Daisy feel sorry for the lonely little colored boy.

Pickaninny was feeling very cheerful when they all started home from school and just as they trooped through the gate he heard, to his great delight, the jolly little tune on the organ! There was the Italian with his little black monkey!

All the children stopped and formed a circle about them, and Antonio plucked off his tiny green hat and began to pass it about, and he was rewarded with several pennies. But it seemed to Pickaninny that the wise little face looked pinched and sad, and he gave him the nuts he had saved from his lunch. The monkey squealed with joy, and looked up into his new friend's face with an almost human expression of gratitude as he squatted on the ground and cleverly cracked and opened the walnuts and ate them hungrily. When Pickaninny stepped back the little animal flew after him, and perched on his shoulder.

This made the children laugh, and Daisy came close and tried to pet him.

Antonio seemed to dislike "the little girl in white," however. Perhaps he felt Pickaninny shrink away when she came nearer, and realized, in that sensitive way which animals have, that she was unkind. At any rate, he jabbered angrily and threw a handful of nutshells right in her face.

The boys and girls shouted with laughter, and that hurt Daisy's feelings even more than the sharp shells had hurt her face, and she began to cry. Then Antonio, wrinkling up his funny little face into a hideous grimace, began to mimic her, digging his fists into his eyes and pretending to weep.

This made the children shriek with mirth, and Daisy flew into such a rage that she could hardly speak.

"I don't care what he does," she said shrilly. "He's just an old black thing like Pickaninny! *Two* black monkeys!"

It almost seemed as if Antonio understood that she was saying something cruel, for he growled fiercely, and made a swift spring at her, snatching off her lovely white lace hat.

Pedro shouted a command at him but he paid no attention, and Daisy's hat was in tatters before the Italian could reach him and cuff him into submission.

The monkey cried out with pain, and Pickaninny ran to Pedro and tried to protect the poor little beast. "Oh, *please* don' hurt him!" he begged. "He didn' mean no harm!"

But the organ grinder gave Pickaninny a shove which almost knocked him over backwards, and hoisting his instrument on his back he started away, muttering furiously to himself in his own tongue.

The children didn't laugh any more, because they were rather frightened. Daisy was so angry that she stopped crying, and all her rage turned against Pickaninny. She walked in front of him and called back—"Nigger, Nigger! Black like a monkey! *Two* black monkeys! Black nigger monkey!"

But Pickaninny didn't mind so much this time, because he knew that Jack and Bess and Mrs. Gray and Miss Vars were his loyal friends, and he grinned to himself when he thought how even Antonio had taken his part

against Daisy, and punished her well for her meanness!

They came presently to the place where they had to cross the stream on a little foot-bridge which was really only a plank, and when Daisy was just half way across she turned back to call "Black nigger monkey!" again, and she didn't watch her steps, and her foot slipped. There was a scream of terror. The little girl in white had fallen into the deepest part of the creek.

The frightened children began to scream, too. They knew that Daisy couldn't swim, and they couldn't swim themselves, and there were no grown-up people near. Some of them rushed to a cottage close by and banged on the door, but there was no one home but a very old woman. Two of the biggest boys ran as fast as they possibly could to call Daisy's father, but the Stevens' house was quite far away, and Daisy was struggling helplessly in the water.

Bess was wailing in heart-broken terror,—"Oh, she'll drown! Poor Daisy'll drown! Oh, oh, *oh!*" and all the girls were crying and all the boys were shouting.

The sounds came faintly to Daisy; she could just barely hear the confused murmur of voices. Now, Daisy had often read stories about drowning people, and how, just at the very last, before they died, they remembered all the mean, unkind things they had done in their lives and felt sorry, and wished—now that it was too late—that they had been better and kinder, and at that terrible moment she thought of the little black boy, and of how she had jeered at him and made the other children turn against him. "Oh, dear, oh, *dear*!" she thought. "I was a bad, wicked, hateful girl! Oh, how I wish I hadn't!"

Up on the bridge and on the bank the boys and girls were weeping and wailing and running up and down and holding out their arms helplessly.

"She's going down for the third time!" someone shouted. "She won't come up again! She's drowning!"

Suddenly Pickaninny tore off his coat and kicked off his shoes "I kin only swim dawg fashion," he gasped. "I don' know if I kin sabe her, but I'se gwine try my bes'!"—and

he jumped into the water with a great splash and began to paddle wildly after Daisy.

Just at that very instant Daisy began to lose consciousness. She was too weak to struggle any more, and she just let herself sink, down. . .down. . .down. . .

Her last thought was about Pickaninny and it seemed to her that she could see his little black face all twisted up with shame and grief when she made fun of him. And then, in the strangest way, her eyes popped open again and she saw the black face close to her, and she thought it was a dream, or that she was already dead.

But the little black face was grinning at her in the cheeriest and friendliest way and Pickaninny's voice said—"Don' be scared! I'se gwine git yo' out!"

Then she did faint, really, and that made it easier for Pickaninny than if she had been struggling, and he held her with one hand and paddled with the other, and made for the bank as fast as he could.

Jack waded out to meet him, and together they were lifting Daisy out of the water when there was the sound of a madly galloping

horse, and Mr. Stevens came dashing down the road.

He pulled his horse up so sharply that it reared right up on its hind legs and he was on the ground in one bound, and rushing to his daughter.

"Daisy! Daisy! *Daisy!*" he kept calling in a hoarse, frightened voice.

Pickaninny, as wet as a little drowned rat, looked up at him and grinned. "Don' be scared, suh," he choked, for his mouth was full of water. "Yo' chile's not drownded! Yo' des' hol' her up an' po' de water out, an' she gwine be all right fo' yo' kin say Possum Pie!"

When Pickaninny reached home he was a sorry looking sight, for all his clothes hung limply about him and ran little streams of water which dripped onto the ground, and his teeth were chattering with cold.

"I'se sho' nuf shame 'er mysef', spoilin' dese grandillious cloze," he said sadly to Mrs. Gray, but Bess had raced home ahead of Jack and Pickaninny and told her mother all about what had happened, and Mrs. Gray called him a "real hero," and made a great fuss over him and said she was very proud to think her children had such a brave boy for their friend.

Then she helped him to take off the soaking things and pop into a tub of piping hot water, and then into a warm bed with a hot water bag at his feet and a cup of hot cocoa to drink, and Pickaninny was so comfortable and happy and drowsy that he could hardly keep his eyes open.

"Do you feel all right, Pic?" Jack asked, anxiously.

"Sho' do," whispered Pickaninny. "Des' ez snug ez er bug in a rug!"

Then he cuddled down under the covers and had a fine nap, and when he wakened Mrs. Gray was just coming back into his room with a tall man following after her.

It was Mr. Stevens, Daisy's father, and he sat down beside the bed and shook hands with Pickaninny and patted him on the back and said—"Well, so this is the brave boy who saved my little daughter from drowning!"

"Sho' was glad I could git her out," said Pickaninny, sitting up in bed.

Jack and Bess and their father and mother were all listening.

"I didn't stop to thank you then," Mr. Stevens went on, "because I wanted to rush Daisy home, but now—"

"I sho' hopes dat lil' gal is feelin' right peart!" Pickaninny cut in eagerly.

"Well, she had a chill, and a little fever, but the doctor says she'll be all right in a day or two. And now—" Mr. Stevens began to smile in the jolliest way—"what do you think

I'm going to give you, to show you how thankful I am to you for what you did?"

"Lawsy, suh," Pickaninny stared, "you' all don' hab to gib me nuffin'!"

"Perhaps I don't have to but I want to," Mr. Stevens wagged his head. "I'm going to give you a big black pony that can run like a streak of lightning!"

There were three shrieks of delight, one from Pickaninny and one from Bess and one from Jack, and Mrs. Gray said—"Oh, how wonderful!"—but Mr. Gray shook his head.

"I'm sure that's very kind," he said, clearing his throat, "but the boy would have no place to keep it—no way of caring for it."

"Oh, Dad," urged Jack, "he could keep it in that shed we never use."

"And as to feed,—we—er—we have never kept animals—"Mr. Gray gave his queer little dry cough.

"Oh, that's all right," Mr. Stevens answered heartily. "I didn't expect the pony to be an expense to the lad, or to you. I'll send hay and grain over every week, and straw for his bedding."

"Well, of course, in that case," Mr. Gray

began, and then he shook his head again. "But the care—"

"The boys will love to take care of him," said Mrs. Gray quickly. "I think you are very kind and generous, Mr. Stevens."

"That's all right," Mr. Stevens stood up and shook hands with Pickaninny once more. "Daisy wants you to come and see her, and she said to tell you she was sorry she teased you."

"Yo' all please tell her dat's all right," Pickaninny beamed. "I'se don' fo'git it!"

Mrs. Gray could hardly get the children to bed that night, and they talked and talked, long after the light was out, because it had been such an exciting day, with Daisy's accident and Pickaninny's rescue of her, and the wonderful gift of the black pony.

Just as Pickaninny fell asleep he thought—"Gwine name dat lil' hawss 'Tony,' after dat monkey 'Antonio.'. . . Sho' am moughty glad he' black. . .des' lak mysef'. . ."

He was wide awake at five in the morning and it seemed an age until breakfast time, and after that he had his chores to do for Mrs. Gray, but finally, about ten o'clock she said—"Well, Pickaninny, I think it's time for

you to go and inquire how Daisy is feeling, and see your pony!"—and Pickaninny was out of the house and down the road like a little streak of black lightning.

The Stevens lived in a big, beautiful house. Pickaninny had never seen such a fine house before, and it made him rather timid as he rang the bell and stood waiting. A maid in a pretty blue dress with a white cap and apron opened the door and asked him what he wanted, but before he could answer, Daisy's mother came running down the stairs.

"Come in, Pickaninny!" she cried. "I'm so glad to see you! Emma," she turned to the maid, "this is the brave little boy who saved Miss Daisy's life! Bring a glass of milk and some cookies up to Miss Daisy's room for him,"

Then she led him upstairs and into the prettiest room he had ever seen in all his life, and there was Daisy propped up against the pillows in a beautiful blue enameled bed. She looked very pale, but she clapped her hands happily when she saw Pickaninny.

"Oh, Pickaninny," she said, "I *do* thank you so much for being so brave, and saving

my life! Just think, I would be *dead* now, if it hadn't been for you," and she began to tremble and to cry.

"There, there, dear, you mustn't think about it any more," her mother comforted her, but there were tears in her own eyes. "We will forget everything about it except Pickaninny's bravery, but we will remember that always, won't we?"

Then Daisy's face got very red, instead of white as it had been, and she murmured, "Pickaninny, please forgive me for being so mean and hateful! Will you, *please*?"

"Lawsy, chile, dat was nuffin'," Pickaninny grinned. "We gwine fo'git dat, des' lak yo' Mammy say."

"Well, now, who wants to see his big black pony?" called a loud, hearty voice, and there was Mr. Stevens in the doorway, and just behind him was Emma with a tall glass of milk and a plate of cookies.

"Reckon *I* does, suh!" Pickaninny chuckled.

"Drink the milk and fill your pockets with the cookies," said Mrs. Stevens. "Perhaps you'd rather have something else than a pony, Pickaninny? You see, Daisy and her father

love horses so much that they couldn't think of anything else as a reward for you."

"Dere's nuffin' in dese worl' I liefer hab," Pickaninny answered earnestly, gulping down the milk, "less'n hit would be Antonio! Dat's de monkey. An' I gwine call de pony 'Tony,' ef you' all don' cyar?"

"You call him whatever you like," said Mr. Stevens. "Come along!"

Pickaninny felt as if his heart would burst with happiness when he saw the big black pony, so sleek and shining, with such a proudly arched neck, such a silky, wavy mane and tail!

"Lawsy, Lawsy!" gasped the little black boy. "I 'low he' de mos' beautiful animule in de whole worl!"

Then Mr. Stevens gave him his first riding lesson, teaching him how to mount and dismount, and how to hold the reins, and after an hour he told him he was a very good pupil. "You like horses, and you're not afraid," he said, approvingly. "You'll be a fine rider in no time. But you mustn't take him out alone, just yet!"

He took Pickaninny and the pony back to

the Gray home, and showed the boys just how to take care of the new pet,—how much to feed him, and how to spread the straw so he could lie down at night.

Mrs. Gray could hardly get the boys away from Tony long enough to eat their lunch, and as soon as they had gulped down the last bite they were out in the shed again, brushing the beautiful pony and feeding him apples and lumps of sugar.

At dusk the children were all waiting eagerly for Mr. Gray to come home.

"Gee, I wish we could ride out and meet him," sighed Jack.

"But Mr. Stevens an' yo' mammy bof say I kaint ride him erlone," objected Pickaninny.

"But you wouldn't be riding him *alone,* if I got on behind," argued Jack. "And it wouldn't be really *riding,* anyhow,—just outside the gate? Aw, come on!"

Pickaninny knew perfectly well that he was doing wrong, but he listened to Jack instead of to his conscience. His conscience was saying—"NO" just as loud as it could, but Jack was saying—"Aw, who's afraid? Come on, Pic!!"—and almost before he real-

ANTONIO, WITH A SQUEAL OF JOY, LEAPT ON PICKANINNY'S SHOULDER

ized what he was doing Pickaninny had slipped the bridle on Tony and was leading him out into the yard. "I won' put de saddle on," he said (as if that made it any less naughty!) "an' we des' walk him up an' down —" and as he said that he climbed on Tony's back.

But Tony was feeling very friskly, because they had fed him too generously of oats, and the moment he felt Pickaninny astride of him he shot out of the yard on a run. Pickaninny had to curl his legs around him and cling with might and main to his neck.

As they tore down the road they passed the Italian with his organ, and Tony slowed down for an instant, and Antonio, with a squeal of joy, leapt on Pickaninny's shoulder!

The Italian gave a howl of rage and started to run after them, but they vanished from sight in a cloud of dust,—the big black pony and the little black boy and the black monkey!

PEDRO'S TREACHERY

For several moments Pedro stood still in the road, staring at that cloud of dust. It had all happened so suddenly that he was bewildered. Then he flew into such a a furious temper that he fairly danced up and down, and ground his teeth, and his eyes grew bloodshot and he swore most frightfully.

Presently he was so tired out with his rage that he dropped down under a tree, panting just like a dog that has run and run till it is exhausted. At first he was too dazed and too angry and too weary to think, but in a few minutes his brain began to work again and he sat up with a gleam in his eye and an evil smile on his face.

"I tell-a da *Po*-lice-a-man," he muttered. "I tell-a heem dat kid steel-a my monkey, steel-a da horse, steel-a da mon'!"

It was almost dark now, and three men

came down the road, walking stealthily and keeping in the deepest shadows.

"Hi! That you, Pedro?" asked one in a whisper.

"Ees-a me!" growled Pedro. "You get-a da mon'?"

"Sure we got it," he answered, but kept on walking.

"How much-a you get?" Pedro wanted to know, trotting along beside.

"Aw, we'll talk about that to-night!" the man snarled crossly, and when Pedro tried to catch hold of him he shook him off and ran down the road in the dark.

"Meet us to-night—same time—barn—" the words came floating back to the Italian.

Pedro was the spy for these three burglars. You see, he had a good excuse to stand by peoples' windows and grind his organ, and often he went into yards and on front porches, and people little dreamed that he was peeking craftily about to see where they kept their money and their silver and their clothing!

Then, late at night, when respectable people were fast asleep in their beds, Pedro would sneak away to the old barn and meet

the three thieves and tell them all he had found out, and in a few days they would rob one of the houses where he had discovered things for them, and they gave him a small share in what they stole.

Usually they did all their robberies at night, but to-day they had robbed the store beyond the school house. Pedro had told them that there was just one old man in charge of the store, and he was lame, and he did not see very well, so one of the robbers called him out of the store and asked him the way to a certain man's house, and pretended not to understand him, so the old man hobbled almost a block to show him and point out the house to him. While he was gone, the other two thieves took all the money in the cash drawer and lots of things besides.

Now, Pedro realized that Pickaninny had dashed by on horseback just a few moments later, and that it would be easy to make the old man believe that the little negro was the thief. It would seem very clear that Pickaninny had done it, and the Italian's wicked eyes gleamed as he started out to find a policeman.

He had to go clear to the station before he found one, because all the policemen were running around in the dark, hunting for the burglars who had robbed the old man's store.

A very big policeman was dozing in a very big chair and Pedro had to shuffle his feet and cough before he woke up and noticed him.

"Say, Mist' *Po*-lice-a-man, one leet-la black-a boy,ee steel-a my monk', ee steal-a one horse, pret' soon I see heem stop at leet-la store, pret' soon ee come out, carry leet-la bag, —ee jump on horse—Presto! Ee gone!"

"What?" yelled the policeman, wide awake in a flash and jumping to his feet. "You saw that? When? Where?" He had snatched the telephone receiver off the hook and was calling a number while he fired questions at Pedro. He was very much excited and in a great hurry to tell the other policemen that the thief who had robbed the little store by the school house was not one of the men they suspected, but the little colored boy who had lately come to town and lived at the Gray's house.

The Italian felt very safe, then, for he was sure he had put all the blame on Pickaninny

instead of on his three burglar pals where it belonged. He hoisted his organ on his back and trudged slowly down the village street until he was out of sight of the station and then he turned into a short cut which led to the old barn and began to hurry as fast as he could.

Meanwhile, Pickaninny had not come home, and Jack and Bess were frightened, and Mr. Gray was shaking his head, and even Mrs. Gray looked anxious.

Just as they sat down to supper a neighbor stopped in to tell them the news,—Pickaninny had stolen the poor organ grinder's monkey, and then robbed the poor old lame store keeper, and ridden away on his big black pony!

"I don't believe it!" Jack shouted, his face getting very red, and Bess began to cry. "Pickaninny couldn't be so wicked," she sobbed.

Jack and his father went down into the village, and Jack told everyone that he knew it was a dreadful mistake, that Pickaninny hadn't done it, but as the evening wore on, with no sign of the little black boy, Mr. Gray and Mr. Stevens decided that it must be true.

Jack was sure that Tony had thrown Pickaninny off, and that he was lying by the road somewhere, hurt—perhaps killed, and he wanted to hunt for him, but his father took him home.

Bess began to cry again when they told her they had no word of Pickaninny, and Jack was miserable enough to cry, too, but, being a boy, he didn't. Kind Mrs. Gray was very sad.

"Now, *this* ends it," said Mr. Gray, shaking his head more sternly than ever before. "You see what comes of taking in good-for-nothing little strays!"

Jack tried to sleep and forget his grief, but all night long he kept waking up, imagining that he heard a sound in Pick's room, and he would run to look, but the little white bed was empty, and the little black boy was gone.

At first, as Tony flew through the gate and up the road, all Pickaninny could think of was hanging on! Then, as they went swiftly past the school, the little store, the cottages, and out of the village and onto a rough, unknown country road, he began to feel terribly lost and scared. Even though he might be able to cling onto Tony, where was Tony taking him?

And what would Jack think? And Bess, and kind Mrs. Gray? They would believe that he had run away from them on purpose, after all their kindness to the strange and friendless little darky boy! That made him feel very miserable in his mind, and he was already wretched enough in his body, for his arms and his legs were cramped and aching from hanging on, and it seemed every moment as if they could not cling much longer.

"Oh, Lawsy, Lawsy," he thought unhappi-

ly, "I des' gwine leggo an' flop! I'se er gone coon dis time!"

But just at that very instant Tony slowed his wild pace and Pickaninny saw that there was an old barn close by. Tony saw it, too, and of course, to Tony's mind, a barn meant rest and food, so he trotted right up to it and stopped.

Pickaninny slipped and slid to the ground as best he could, with little yelps of pain, for he was so weak and sore that he could hardly stand, and he felt faint and dizzy as well. He steadied himself after a moment and pushed back the heavy, creaking door, and led Tony and Antonio into the barn. It was dark and just at first Pickaninny could not see anything, but after his eyes grew accustomed to the very dim light he could barely make out piles of hay which looked as if they had been slept on, some old broken down wagons and bits of shabby harness, and a lantern hanging on the wall near the wagon.

"Golly, but I wishes I had er match!" he sighed.

Tony had discovered the hay at once, and began to eat it rather scornfully, poking it

about with his nose, for it was very different from the clean, crisp hay he was used to having for his supper.

Antonio acted very strangely when he saw Pickaninny take down the lantern. He gave little shrill squeaks and started hopping about excitedly, looking into barrels and boxes and swinging himself up on the rafters. He looked so spooky and ghost-like that it made Pickaninny feel creepy, and he called sharply to him.

"Hi, dar, Antonio! Yo'-all come erlong down hyar!"

The monkey came obediently, and jumped on Pickaninny's shoulder and in one dark little paw he held several matches.

"Jimminy Crickets!" Pickaninny chuckled. "Yo' sho' is one moughty handy animule! Huc' come yo' know what I want?" He lighted the lantern and then it seemed a little more cheerful. "I'se cert'ny glad I'se got yo'," he said, hugging the little beast, who cuddled down in his arms very cosily. "But, Lawsy, I sho' is hongry! Reckon my stummick thinks my throat's don' cut! Antonio, is yo' hongry?"

At those words the monkey sprang out of Pickaninny's arms, jabbering noisily, and ran over to a big box covered with gunny sacks, stuck his little black arm in, and came hopping back with a cracker.

Pickaninny was so astonished that he nearly fell over backward. "Well, I be gee-conswizzled," he gasped. "Yo' all unnerstan's ebery word I says wif my mouf!" Then he went to the box himself and was delighted to find a good supply of crackers and cheese and ham, and he set the lantern on a ledge nearby and he and the monkey ate thankfully until their hunger was satisfied. "Cert'ny 'pear to me lak yo' been hyar befo', Antonio," said Pickaninny, very much puzzled. "An' now what we' all needs is er drink!" He found a pump outside, a tin can, and a bucket, and after he and Antonio had quenched their thirst he carried a big bucketful inside to Tony.

"Po' Tony," Pickaninny sighed. "I know yo' po'ful tired! Des' lay 'yo sef down an' res', and soon ez hits light, we's gwine home."

He was thankful to see Tony let himself wearily down on the hay, and he himself snuggled down in the next pile, with Antonio

in his arms for company and comfort, but his thoughts were very sad. He kept thinking of his good friends and what they would think of him, and he realized that once again, just as in his terrible adventure with Old Lady Grimes, he had brought all the trouble upon himself by being bad and disobedient. He hid his face against Antonio's soft fur and cried a few sorry tears. "Reckon I'se de no-countes' trash ob de worl'," he told himself. "Des oughter go back to de Orphans' Home an' hab 'em frail de hide off'n me!"

But he was so dreadfully tired that presently he stopped scolding himself and was just falling asleep when he heard noises which made him instantly wide awake again.

There were steps outside, and muffled voices, and then, by the flickering light of the lantern, he saw three men come creeping in.

"Hi, Pedro!" one of them called softly.

"He must be here," another said, when there was no answer. "Who lit the light?"

"Gee,—look! A horse!" said the third in great astonishment. "Say, the Wop must a' made a clean-up!" He took the lantern and went closer to Tony. "Good horse, too,—

worth something, when we get him far enough away from here to sell him!"

"Well, let's beat it!" the first one urged. He came up to Tony and gave him a cruel kick, and the pony scrambled to his feet and stood trembling.

"Don' yo' kick my Tony hawss!" cried Pickaninny furiously.

"Well, look who's here!" one of the men laughed, catching hold of the little black boy and pulling him nearer the light, but another growled crossly.—"What you doin' here, kid?"

"I—I des' sleepin' hyar fo' de night," Pickaninny quavered.

"All right,—you go to sleep again, and keep your eyes shut and your mouth shut, too, see? Don't you peep about seein' us here! If you do, it'll be worse for you, get me?"

"Y-Y-yes, suh!" Pickaninny answered, his knees knocking together so he could hardly stand.

"Well,—there's Pedro's monkey!" exclaimed the biggest man. "I'll be blowed!"

"Then the Wop must be around somewhere. We better wait."

"Wait, nothin'," snarled the one who looked the wickedest of all. "We'll go while the goin's good. But we better fix this kid first. Whad'ya say we bump 'm off?"

"Aw, nix on that," said the youngest of the three who looked as if he might possibly have a heart somewhere about him. "Just tie him up so he can't squeal on us till we make our get-a-way!"

He stood the terrified child against a post and tied a rope around him several times so that he couldn't move.

"Oh, pleaze, pleaze, *pretty*-pleaze don' take my Tony hawss!" begged Pickaninny, the tears rolling down his cheeks. "I don't kyar what yo' does to me, but *don'* take my hawss!"

"Shut up, kid!" growled the man who was tying him.

"Stop his mouth, or I'll—" the worst one made a threatening motion, and the youngest one took a dirty old scarf off his neck and forced Pickaninny's mouth open and put the scarf in for a gag, and then tied it behind the post, so he was unable to move his head or to make a sound.

"Sleep tight, coon kid!" one laughed, and

then, jumping on Tony and kicking him, he dashed out of the barn, and the other two followed, the last one kicking the lantern over so that the boy was left alone in the inky black darkness.

Oh, how dark and how still it was! As the moments passed slowly by it seemed to Pickaninny as if all the noise and all the light had gone out of the world forever. Then, after what seemed an hour, but was really only a very little time, he heard a soft sound, and presently a little scared whimper. Antonio, terrified by the rough men, had climbed high up on a rafter, and now he was creeping down again to find his friend.

He sprang on Pickaninny shoulder and ran his little paws softly over his face and when he found the scarf crammed into his mouth he just squealed with angry sympathy and soon his tiny fingers and his sharp teeth were busy with the knot.

"Oh, Antonio, bres' yo' heart! I cert'ny does feel ter gratitude yo'!" gasped Pickaninny when the rough old stuff fell down at last and he could speak. "Now, does yo' reckon yo' kin git de res' ob me loose?"

And just as if he understood every word, the monkey began to work on the knots in the rope, chattering crossly and excitedly all the while. This was a much harder task, and it took him a long time, but as soon as Pickaninny could pull one arm out he could help, too, and finally he was free again. He hugged Antonio gratefully, but his heart was heavy. "My po' Tony hawss," he moaned. "I'se nebber, nebber gwine see yo' ergin!"

He stepped outside and peered anxiously about in the dark. "What we'-all gwine do now, Antonio?" he whispered to the monkey. "I'se scared to start home, an' I'se scared to stay hyar! I reckon we better—"

But just as he spoke he heard the snapping of twigs and the crackle of dry leaves, and there was a dark shape coming toward them down the old road!

"Lawsy, Lawsy! Anudder robber!" thought Pickaninny, crouching down in terror.

He heard the man go stumbling into the barn, and he held Antonio very tightly and hoped and prayed that he would not make a noise.

At first he thought it was one of the three burglars come back again, but when he heard some angry swearing in a strange, foreign tongue he knew that it was the organ grinder, and he could feel the monkey trembling in his arms when he heard the voice of his cruel master.

"Des' yo' keep still ez er mouse, an' I won' let him git yo'!" he whispered, cuddling the scared little beast in his arms.

Pedro, in the meantime, was hunting for the lantern which was not in its usual place. At last, by striking matches, he found it on the floor where the last burglar had kicked it over, and finally he managed to get it lighted. Then he saw many things which puzzled him,

—the hay trampled and pushed all about, and the rope and the scarf by the post, showing that someone had been held prisoner there.

He couldn't understand it at all, but it made him very nervous. (Of course, people like Pedro and the three burglars, who break the law, are always nervous. You see, *they* know they have done wrong, and they are always expecting to be found out, and that is a very uncomfortable position to be in!)

Pedro had just about made up his mind to get away from that barn as fast as he could, when he spied Antonio's tiny green hat on the floor, and that told him, at once, that Pickaninny had been there. Of course he wanted to get his monkey back, not because he really loved him, because he didn't—indeed, he was very mean and cruel to him—but Antonio was very valuable to him. People who didn't care at all for hand organ music would stop and watch Antonio's cunning tricks, and children loved him and put many a copper and nickel and dime in his little green hat, and without him Pedro's business would not amount to very much, and he knew it only too well.

So now he stood still and called harshly—"Antonio! Antonio!"

Pickaninny tried his very best to keep the monkey quiet, but when the poor little beast heard Pedro call he tried to go to him, not that he wanted to, but because he knew from sad experience that delay in obeying meant a very severe punishment. He could not get away from his new friend, but he gave a little scared squeal, and Pedro heard it.

"Antonio!" he called again, and then he said some very cross and threatening things in Italian.

Pickaninny couldn't understand the words but he could understand the tone perfectly well. "Keep *still*!" he urged Antonio in a frantic whisper. "Ef'n he kotch yo' now, he gwine frail de fur off'n yo'!" He held his hand over the monkey's mouth and crawled under a bush with him.

No sooner had he hidden himself than he heard an automobile coming nearer and nearer, and presently it stopped and five policemen jumped out and rushed into the barn.

Quick as a flash Pedro ran to them crying—"Oh, Mist' *Po*-lice-a-man, I hunt for my leet-

la monk'! I find-a hees *hat*, I no find-a *heem*! Bad leet-la black boy, ee steal!"

At first the policemen didn't pay very much attention to Pedro, but when he kept on crying and moaning—"Oh, my leet-la monk'! Oh, my leet-la Antonio, I love-a heem so much-a!" they began to feel sorry for him, and listened to what he had to say.

Meanwhile, Antonio was so terrified at the thought of the beating he would get when his master finally found him (he had tried to run away once or twice before, you see, and it always ended by Pedro's finding him and being more cruel than ever!) that he was fighting madly to get away from Pickaninny, and in spite of all the boy could do he squealed loud enough to be heard.

"Oh, You hear?" cried the Italian. "Ees my leet-la monk'! Eee call me!" He began to run around excitedly. "Bad black-a boy, ee 'ide hem!"

"Shut up a minute, can't you?" roared one of the policemen. "Listen! There it is again, —it's outside!"

Then Pedro and all the officers dashed outside and hunted high and low, turning on

their flashlights, and of course it was only a very few minutes before they had discovered Pickaninny and yanked him roughly out from under the bush.

"Now we got him!" shouted one with great satisfaction.

"Fine," said another. "Got the thief that robbed the store and stole the Wop's monkey!"

"I nebber stole nuffin'!" Pickaninny sobbed. "I'se not a *feefe*!"

"Aw, then what was ye hidin' for?" one wanted to know.

"I don' scared yo'-all was de robbers comin' back! Das' why I hid!"

"Don't lie to me, you little black rascal!" the policeman thundered, giving him a box on the ear.

"*Bad-a* black boy," snarled Pedro. "Come, Antonio! Come to Pedro!"

But the monkey, when he found himself face to face with his master again, clung pitifully to Pickaninny, and the Italian had to drag him away.

The oldest of the policemen, who had a round, jolly face stared at that. "Say, he's not very crazy to get back to you, is he?" he asked.

"Say, maybe you're lyin' to us, and the kid here's tellin' the truth!"

"Oh, I is! 'Deed'n deed I *is*! 'Cross my heart, hope nebber to see de back ob my neck!" stuttered Pickaninny, running to him and throwing his arms about the long legs in the blue uniform.

Pedro, who didn't like the turn things were taking, grabbed up Antonio and his organ and shuffled hastily off in the dark.

"Come along, kid, and none o' your lip!" roared the cross policeman, and he put his heavy hand on the little negro's shoulder and hustled him along to the machine, threw him roughly in, and the car started back to the village.

"Oh, Lawsy, Lawsy," moaned Pickaninny. "Where is we gwine?"

The policeman gave him another cuff. "Keep still!" he thundered. "You're goin' where you belong,—you're goin' to jail!"

A FRIEND IN JAIL

It seemed to Pickaninny that he must surely die of shame and terror as the car slowed up at the jail and the cross policeman pushed him roughly out.

"Get in with ye!" he ordered, and after a moment which seemed like a black nightmare a heavy door clanged shut and the terrified little darky found himself shut up in a cell as if he had been a full-sized, dangerous criminal.

He was so frightened he couldn't even cry! His eyes rolled until only the whites showed, and his breath came in such great gasps it seemed as if it must tear his thin little chest to pieces.

Then he heard the door open, and the oldest policeman's round, red, jolly face showed for an instant. "Whist, kid," he wheezed, "be aisy, now! Th' Matron'll be here in a jiffy, an' thin ye'll be all right!"

Now the word "Matron" made Pickaninny

think of the Orphans' Home, and instead of making him feel better, as the kindly officer intended, it made him feel a thousand times worse, and when the door was shut again he ran round and round in the cell, like a poor little mouse in a trap, and when he heard someone coming he started to shriek.

"Now, now, huc' come yo' mek sech er scandillious noise, Honey-chile?" said a soft, jolly voice, and Pickaninny opened his eyes which he had screwed tight shut and stared up at the biggest, fattest blackest colored Mammy he ever imagined!

When she looked down at the scared, miserable little fellow she began to make cosy, comfortable, clucking sounds just like a big, motherly hen, and she sat right down and picked him up in her arms and cuddled him, and her lap was so soft it was just like being in a featherbed!

"Now, den, Honey-bubble! Now, den, Possum-pie!" she crooned, and began to rock him gently and to sing in a husky, sweet voice—

"'Hi, Jinny, Ho, Jinny,
Come erlong er me!
Hi, Jinny, Ho, Jinny,

Yo' shall be free!—
Free ez er bee
On er huckleberry tree—
Hi, Jinny, Ho, Jinny Johnsing!'"

Pickaninny stopped trembling and he stopped crying and he stopped worrying! There was something about Mammy. . .she was so soft and warm. . .she was his own kind . . .she *belonged*. . . It seemed as if she was singing more and more softly. . .lower and lower . . .

"'—Free ez er bee . . .
On er huckleberry tree. . .'"

Pickaninny fell fast asleep!

Next morning the policemen sent for Pickaninny and asked him a great many questions about the monkey and the horse and the robbery at the little store, and why he was hiding under a bush.

Mr. Gray came down to the jail, shaking his head. He told Pickaninny that he must tell the truth, and he would try to help him, but Pickaninny could see that he didn't believe a word he said.

"Oh, Lawsy, suh, yo' all don' believe I stole hit, does yo'?" he wailed.

"But if you were innocent, why did you hide?" Mr. Gray wanted to know, sternly.

Mammy planted herself firmly before Mr. Gray and faced him wrathfully. "Why yo' hide *yo'* sef ef'n yo see mo' robbers an' rapscallions den yo' kin handle? Ought to be shame er yo' sef, suh, pickin' on dis po' lil' orphunt baby chile!" She just glared at him.

Then Mr. Stevens came, saying Daisy was very unhappy because the boy who saved her life was in trouble, and he tried hard to make the policemen let Pickaninny go, but they said they must first make him tell them where he had hidden the money.

"And then," said the crossest of them all, "we'll pop the little black rascal into the Reform School where he belongs!"

That made Pickaninny sob with fright, but Mammy hugged him and whispered,—"Nebber yo' mine', Possum-pie! White trash! Das' what des is! We gwine stick togedder, yo'n me!"

They took Pickaninny out to the old barn again, and a large crowd followed, Mr. Gray, looking very stern and shaking his head, and Mr. Stevens, very red in the face and angry

at the crossest policeman, and Jack Gray, among them.

Jack worked his way through the crowd and held out his hand to Pickaninny. "*I* know you didn't do it, Pic!" he said. "And so does my mother, and Bess and Daisy, and Mr. Stevens and Mrs. Stevens and Miss Vars!"

The ugly policeman took Pickaninny into the barn and showed him a long riding whip. "Now, then, kid," he said, "talk fast! Where'd ye' hide that money?"

"I nebber did hide hit *no* place kaze I nebber did steal hit!" said Pickaninny bravely, looking right up in his face.

"Good boy! That's the way to talk," said Mr. Stevens, approvingly.

That made the policeman madder than ever, and he snapped the whip so close to Pickaninny's little thin legs that he danced with terror. "Quick, now! Where'd ye' hide it?" he roared.

At that Jack Gray broke away from his father and flew at the big policeman and kicked him in the shins with all his might. "You let Pickaninny alone, you great big *coward*!" he shouted.

Everybody laughed in the crowd, and although Mr. Gray boxed his son's ears many of the grown up people couldn't help being pleased at Jack's loyalty to his black friend.

Just then Pickaninny spied Pedro standing at a little distance looking and listening eagerly. "Look dar," he screamed. "Dat Eyetalian man, he kin tell yo' all erbout hit! Yo'-all ask *him*!"

The Italian began to shuffle away very quickly, but another of the policemen laid a heavy hand on his shoulder and stopped him. "Come along now, and tell us what ye' know," he said.

"Yes," said Mr. Stevens, "he looks like a hard character to me."

Pedro turned vivid with fear, and pretended that he had never been in that old barn in all his life before, except last evening when he had been hunting for his dear pet monkey which the bad black boy had stolen, but while he was talking and everyone listening to him Antonio slipped off the organ and began to run around.

"Looks to me as if that monkey was very

much at home here," said Mr. Stevens, watching him closely.

"No, no, ee nevair come here before las' night," sputtered Pedro.

Just as he said that, Antonio ran to the big box and pushed back the gunny sacks and stuck in his arm and brought out a cracker, which he began to eat hungrily.

A startled murmur ran round the crowd, and the policeman kept a firm hold on Pedro who was trying to explain that Antonio had just *smelt* the cracker and been guided to the box in that way, but while he was whining about it something even more exciting happened.

Antonio finished his cracker and then began to hunt all around in the ledges and corners and on the rafters, and at last he found a little twisted piece of paper, and jabbering noisily he brought it to his master. Pedro popped it in his mouth, but two policemen forced his mouth open before he could swallow it.

It took the two of them, then, to hold the wildly fighting Italian and Mr. Stevens read the letter aloud. It was from the three burglars, and it proved beyond a doubt that Pedro

was their spy, and that they had robbed the little store!

The cross policeman looked rather foolish and the good-natured one patted Pickaninny on the back, and the crowd was so delighted to see the poor little black fellow proved innocent that they shouted and cheered. Mr. Gray cleared his throat and coughed and said that he was extremely pleased, of course, and Mr. Stevens shook hands with Pickaninny and said he must hurry to tell Daisy the good news.

"All right, Pic," said Jack, happily and proudly, "now we'll go home!"

"Yes, my boy," his father added. "You may come with us."

But this time it was Pickaninny who shook his head. "No, suh," he said. "No, Jack, an' I thanks yo' des de same. I'se gwine back to Mammy at de jail!" And with Antonio, who had perched joyfully on his shoulder, Pickaninny ran and jumped in the patrol wagon of his own accord.

A LETTER FROM THE ORPHANS' HOME

Jack Gray was as important as the ring master of a circus next Monday morning, for he could tell the school children all about the thrilling happenings out at the old barn.

Over and over again he had to repeat the story,—of how cross the policeman was, cracking the big riding whip around Pickaninny's legs, and how he tried to help him, and of how the monkey Antonio had really saved the black boy by proving that Pedro was the spy of the three burglars.

"And then the policemen hid in the barn and waited till night and caught the burglars," he finished up, "and they made them tell where they had sold the horse, and a policeman has gone to bring him back."

"But where's Pickaninny?" the children wanted to know.

That made Jack very sad. "He went back to the colored Mammy at the jail," he said.

Miss Vars had been listening. "I'm afraid there were so many unkind white people that the poor little fellow thinks he is safer with one of his own kind," she sighed. "Now, if he comes back here, I want all you children to promise me to be very, very good to him! Remember how bravely he saved Daisy's life, and just think how one of you would feel if you were the only *white* child in a school full of *negro* children!"

That was a new idea to the children, and they all promised her faithfully to be kind to Pickaninny if he came back.

Down in her little shanty behind the jail Mammy had bustled about preparing a very simple breakfast while Pickaninny toasted his toes before the fire and Antonio jumped here, there, and everywhere, curiously inspecting his new home.

"Hyar, yo' onery, no'count animule!" she scolded, snatching an egg out of his paw just in time. "Don' yo' all knows eggs is wuth *money*? Pickaninny, chile, we sho' is gotter put dat debbil in er cage!"

The monkey ran to Pickaninny and began

"DON' YO' ALL KNOW EGGS IS WUTH *MONEY*?"

to whimper. "Yo' hyar dat, Mammy?" the boy smiled. "He unnerstan' ebery word we say! He des' pintly pine erway an' *die*, eff'n we put him in er cage! He gwine be good now, isn' yo', Antonio?" And Antonio jabbered gravely in reply.

"Come eat yo' brek'fus, Honey lamb," said Mammy, putting two saucers of mush and a pitcher of milk on the table.

Pickaninny sighed. "What I likes *mos'* bes' fo' my brek'fus is griddle cakes an' maple syrup!"

"Griddle cakes an' maple syrup," the old woman sputtered. "Who all yo' think yo' is? —Kings an' presidents? I'se po 'n Job's turkey an' moughty lucky to hab ernuf mush'n milk. If yo' craves quality food, den des' yo' tek yo' foot in yo' han' an' laig hit up de hill to de white folks!"

"Oh, Mammy, I don' *likes* dis nice mush!" said Pickaninny, hastily, ashamed of his ingratitude. "I des' pintly *lubs* hit!"—and to prove it he ate it all up and licked the spoon!

Just as Mammy was leaving for her work at the jail an officer came to the shanty leading Tony.

"Here's the kid's pony," he said, handing her the rope and going away at once.

"Oh, Tony, Tony, I sho' is po'ful glad to git yo' back!" cried Pickaninny joyfully, flinging his arms about the proudly arched neck, and feeling very sad to see how tired and dusty his beautiful pony was. "Whar kin I put him, Mammy?"

"Whar kin yo' put him?" she repeated, rolling her eyes. "Whar yo' reckon yo' kin put him? On de table? On de cook stove? In my baid? Lan' er Goshen," she fanned herself with her battered old straw hat, "when I tek dis orphunt chile I nebber 'spect I gotter tek er whole circus full er animules erlong wid him!" She began to mutter and sputter. "Firs' comes er ape, an' den comes er fancy pony hawss—I 'spec' nex' come de lions an' tigers an' de *effalunts*!" She looked as stern as it was ever possible for such a kind and jolly person to look. "Yo' tek dat pony hawss away fum hyar, yo' hyar me shout!"

"Oh, Mammy, *pleaze*!" Pickaninny wailed.

"Suit yo'sef, black chile," she said solemnly. "Ef'n yo' lifer hab dat animule dan Mammy —" She stooped down and gave him a hearty

hug. "Lawsy, Possum pie, ef'n I was rich yo' could hab all de animules in Massa Noah's ark, but I'se got all an' mo' den I kin tote, feedin' *us*!"

After she had trudged away, Pickaninny made up his mind. He would give Tony to Jack, his faithful friend. Then, although he hated dreadfully to give his pet away, he would know that he had the best kind of a home and loving care, and at the same time it was a wonderful way to show his gratitude to Jack.

That afternoon, when he knew Jack would be home from school, he started up the hill with Antonio on his shoulder, leading Tony, and it seemed to him as if the beautiful black pony knew that he was to be given away, for he hung his head sadly and walked slowly and reluctantly.

Pickaninny explained it all to him as they climbed the hill. "An' yo' des boun ter be happy wif Jack," he finished. "An' dat's whar yo' belong, kaze yo's er *quality* hawss."

Jack was so astonished when Pickaninny made him the wonderful present that his eyes grew wider and wider and he stood staring

with his mouth open. He simply couldn't believe it.

"But, Pic," he said at last, "it's the grandest thing that ever happened to me in all my life, but I just can't take Tony away from you!"

"But yo' gotter tek him, kaze I kaint keep him," Pickaninny urged.

"Well, then, look here! We'll *both* own him—fifty-fifty! We'll divvy up on him!" Jack was so happy and excited he couldn't wait to tell his mother, and the two boys ran into the house.

Mrs. Gray was very glad to see Pickaninny and hoped he was going to stay with them again. She was making the very same fat, puffy ginger cookies with raisins and cocoanut in them that she had been making the first time Pickaninny had come to her house, and the sight and the smell of them just made his mouth water!

She gave him all he could hold in both hands and a big drink of rich milk, and she was very much surprised and touched when Jack told her about Tony.

"Reckon I better laig hit down de hill an'

tell Mammy dat I don' gib Tony erway," Pickaninny said after a while. "She po'ful worried, kaze she too po' ter feed him! An' I gwine sabe dis cooky fo' her! She nebber tast' nuffin' so good endurin' her life!"

Mrs. Gray gave him another cooky for himself and one for Antonio, and Pickaninny went down the hill to Mammy's little shanty with a light heart.

But it turned to a heavy heart as soon as he was inside the door, for there on the kitchen table was a letter which had come to the Police Station and which someone had brought to Mammy. It was a big white envelope with typewriting on it, and up in the corner, in very stern looking black letters was printed "THE ORPHANS' HOME."

When Pickaninny saw that he began to tremble, and all the peace and happiness which had filled his day were suddenly blotted out, just the way a dark cloud covers up the sun.

OLD LADY GRIMES AGAIN

"Dey gwine git me erway fum Mammy!" was Pickaninny's first terrified thought, and his second thought was to take Antonio on his shoulder and run away.

But he knew that the policemen could easily follow him in an automobile, and where could he hide with the monkey, and find food and shelter He was the only black child for miles and miles, and everyone would know about him.

When Mammy came in at last, tired from her day's work at the jail, she found a shaking, tearful little darky boy waiting for her.

"Dere's tir'ble bad news in dis house, Mammy," he said. "But firs' yo's gwine eat dis cooky I don' fotch fo' yo'!"

Just as he was handing her the treasured cooky Antonio made a grab for it and crammed it into his tiny green hat, but Pickaninny managed to rescue it. "Hit's kiner

mussed up, but I reckon de tase' s jes' ez good!" he apoligized.

Mammy ate every crumb and smacked her lips. "Cert'ny is gallumpshus!" she beamed. "An' yo' is er angel chile to sabe hit for yo' ol' Mammy!" She brushed the crumbs off the calico bosom of her dress and smiled. "Now, den, lemme hyar dis bad news!"

Pickaninny handed her the letter and stood in trembling silence while she put on her big steel rimmed spectacles and slowly spelled it out, because Mammy had never been to school and she couldn't read very well.

"Humph!" she said with a sort of a snort, tossing her head. "Wants yo' back, does dey? Well, den, le'm come an' git yo'!"

"Oh, no, *no*!" wept Pickaninny. "*Don'* le'm git me!"

She sat down and took him in her soft, cosy lap. "Now, den, Possum Pie, what I means is, I des like to see dem try hit!"

That comforted Pickaninny, and yet he didn't believe one poor old colored woman could keep him away from a great institution like the Orphans' Home, and he asked to see the letter, and they read it over together. It

surely did sound very sad. Pickaninny, the law said, must go back and live at the Orphans' Home unless someone was willing to adopt him.

"What am dat?" asked Pickaninny, anxiously.

"Why, chile, dat means when somebody tek yo' fo' dere own chile, an' gib yo' dere name, an' keep yo' fo' ebber."

"Oh, Mammy, kaint yo' 'dopt me?" he wanted eagerly to know.

The old woman sighed. "Dey won' lemme do hit, Honey bubble, kaze dey'll say I'se too po', an' I kaint eddicate yo'. No. We gotter git er dif'funt idee dan dat!" She thought earnestly, frowning, and suddenly she gave a shout and pushed Pickaninny off her lap and waddled out of the house.

"Oh, Mammy whar yo' gwine?" the boy called, running after her.

"I'se gwine to de telephone," she answered. "Yo' all stay dere, lak er good chile twel I gits back!"

Pickaninny felt somewhat cheered, because she looked so happy and confident, and he played, quite contentedly, with Antonio while

she was gone, but after one look at her face when she came into the little house again, his heart sank.

"I had er gret idee only hit wasn't wuth much," she said, bitterly, and as she moved heavily about getting supper she kept muttering and scolding to herself.

"What's the matter, Mammy?" Pickaninny asked.

"Nem'mine what de matter is," she wagged her head. "I'se gwine git *anudder* idee!"

The truth was that she had called up both Mrs. Gray and Mrs. Stevens on the telephone and asked them, in turn, to adopt Pickaninny, and when the ladies tried to explain that while they liked and felt sorry for the little colored boy and would try their very best to help him, they really couldn't adopt him as a brother to their children, Mammy was so angry that she banged up the receiver and came sputtering home. She didn't tell this to Pickaninny because she thought it would break his heart.

Presently she stopped being cross and whispered as she worked—"Oh, good Lawd, I know Yo'-all gwine help me! I done prom-

is dis po' lamb dat I sabe him! Now, Lawd, I'se done *my* bes', an' I des' waitin' for Yo' to do *yours*!"

And just about ten minutes after she had said that, a beautiful limousine stopped before the shanty, and a feeble old lady got slowly out with the help of a trained nurse. The old lady was well bundled up, and there were white bandages on her head, and she was very pale.

Mammy stepped to the door and made a curtsy. "Who was yo' lookin' fo', Ma'am?" She was sure there must be some mistake.

"Is there a little colored boy here called 'Pickaninny?' " the old lady asked in a quavering voice.

"Yes, ma'am, dere is," answered Mammy. "Is yo'-all fum de Orphans' Home?"

"No," she smiled sadly, "I am—"

But just at that instant Pickaninny, who had come curiously close and was crowding past Mammy in the doorway, got a good look at her. "Oh, Lawsy! *Old Lady Grimes!*" he shrieked, and flew into the house and banged the door behind him, and crawled under Mammy's bed.

Mammy was very much ashamed of the way her charge had acted. "Huc' come dat chile act dat-er-way?" she sputtered. "Come in, ma'am, an' res' yo'sef. 'Pears lak yo' not feelin' very peart?"

"I have been very ill," the lady said. "In fact, I am not well, yet, and the doctor and the nurse did not want me to come. But I could not rest until I had found him!" A flush came into her white face. "I will tell you why the poor child was so terrified when he saw me. I was injured in a train wreck, and my mind was affected. I forgot who I was, and I lived all alone and became absolutely insane. I—" she faltered and the tears came into her eyes—"I abused that poor little colored boy dreadfully. I cannot bear to remember it." She pressed her handkerchief to her eyes and trembled violently.

"Now, Mrs. Harrison," said the nurse,

warningly, "you know you promised not to excite yourself! You are still very weak."

"Yes, yes," the old lady controlled herself. "I will be careful! But I want to see the little fellow, please."

Mammy went after Pickaninny, and had much trouble in persuading him that it was safe to come out from under the bed!

When he was face to face with the old lady he looked long and earnestly into her sad eyes. " 'Scuse me, lady," he ventured timidly. "I done made er mistake, thinkin' yo' was Old Lady Grimes."

"I *was* 'Old Lady Grimes,' " she said, smiling wistfully at him, "but—thank God—I am not, any more! You see, when they took me to the Asylum they put me in the hospital and discovered that something was pressing on my brain. They performed an operation and lifted it off, and now I can think clearly again, and I am so sorry and ashamed of all the cruel things I did."

Pickaninny was greatly embarrassed, "Nem'mine 'bout me, lady," he said, "I'se all right, now."

"No, yo' *not* all right, po' lamb," said

Mammy hotly. "Dey gwine tek yo' off to de Orphunts' Home!"

"Lawsy, I done fo' got dat fo' 'er minute!" Pickaninny's face fell.

"What is that?" asked Mrs. Harrison quickly.

Then Mammy explained the whole thing to her, even telling her about Mrs. Gray and Mrs. Stevens and how they refused to adopt the little colored boy.

"Well," the old lady smiled very sweetly and encouragingly," all that is easily remedied. I can understand that they would not think it wise to bring up a colored child in their families, no matter how kindly they might feel, but I have no children, and no near relatives, and there is no reason why I cannot take Pickaninny into my household. He shall have an excellent education and everything that makes for happy childhood and youth, and I will provide for him in my will." She leaned back in her chair very wearily and the nurse said she must not stay any longer.

"Very well. . .I am very weak. . .I will come back to-morrow," agreed the old lady,

letting the nurse help her up. "Good-bye, little boy! I shall make up to you for all I made you suffer!"

Pickaninny waved and waved until her automobile was out of sight and then he ran indoors and hugged Mammy with all his might and main and they laughed and cried with relief and happiness.

Just as they were sitting down to supper, and Pickaninny was beginning to wonder what made Mammy so sad and quiet, when he was so joyful, there was a rap on the door, and in came Mrs. Gray and Jack.

"Oh, Pic, see what I've brought you!" cried Jack. "Mother told me about the mean old Orphans' Home trying to get you back again, and how you had to go unless somebody adopted you and—and—"

He had to stop to catch his breath, and then Mrs. Gray went on, speaking to Mammy. "I knew you would love to adopt Pickaninny if you could afford it, so I thought it was only fair for my son—"

Here Jack cut in again, having taken a long breath,—"So Mother let me take all the money out of my bank account that I've been

saving and saving, to pay you for the pony, Pickaninny, and now you won't have to go, will you?" He gave him two hundred dollars!

And then, while they were all talking excitedly and interrupting each other, there was another rap at the door, and in marched Mr. Stevens.

"My wife and I have been talking it over," he said, "and we want to stand by the boy who saved Daisy's life. Here is a check for five hundred dollars, Mammy, for his food, and clothes and schooling, and when that is gone he shall have more, and we'll help him until he is old enough to help himself."

Well ,after they were all gone and the little house was quiet again Mammy and Pickaninny tried to eat their long delayed supper, but they were too excited, and Antonio got most of it. But Pickaninny was puzzled again to see all the gladness dying out of Mammy's kind face and sadness taking its place.

"What de matter, Mammy, honey?" he asked, jumping from his chair and running to her and putting his arms about her neck.

"Oh. . .nem'mine 'bout me, chile," she said with a great, gusty sigh. "Yo' gwine lib wid

de quality white lady, an' I gwine back to ol' Alabam' whar I comes fum."

"Mammy!" Pickaninny's eyes opened wide and his lip began to quiver. "Is yo' gwine off? Why, I kaint be happy wid dat lady er *nob*uddy lees'n yo's close by!"

"Honey lamb," said the old black woman, solemnly, "yo'-all mus' mek up yo' mine' an' mek up yo' heart. Is yo' gwine back to Alabam' wid me, an' grow up 'long yo' own color an' yo' own tribe an' kinnery, or is yo' gwine stay hyar?"

"I wants to stay hyar," cried Pickaninny, "an' stay in dat lady's house a'n go to school an' play wid Jack!"

"All right, den," she wagged her head mournfully. "Say no mo', chile, say no mo'! Now, den, yo' better procative to yo' baid, kaze yo' had er moughty ox-citin' day."

When he was ready to hop in she came and sat down in the big chair and rocked him for a few minutes. "Cert'ny gwine miss yo', Possum pie!"

"Mammy, what's it like in Alabam'?" he asked her drowsily.

"Lan' er Goshen, chile, hits so lubby I kaint fine' no words to 'splain 'bout hit!"

"An' is dere lots er black folks lak yo'n me, Mammy?"

"*Is* dey? Chile, yo' hyar me shout,—black folks thicker'n blackberries on de vine! Young an' old—"

"Lil' boys lak me?"

"Millions an' *squil*-ions er lil' boys lak yo'!"

"Den dey wouldn' nebber call me 'Nigger-nigger. . . .coon. . .'"

"Nebber!" Then she began to croon—

"Hi, Jinny, Ho, Jinny,
Come erlong er me!
Hi, Jinny, Ho, Jinny,
Yo' shall be free—"

and when she saw that Pickaninny was asleep she laid him softly in bed, and tiptoed away, still humming—

"Free ez er bee
On er huckleberry tree—
Hi, Jinny, Ho, Jinny Johnsing!"

That night Pickaninny had a wonderful dream. . . He saw himself down in Alabama with his kind Mammy taking care of him

while he was small, and then he saw himself taking care of her, when she was old, and he was big and strong. He saw himself going to school and to college, and learning to be a teacher, so he could help his own people to be wise and good. He saw himself writing letters to Jack, who would always be his friend, and he saw Daisy Stevens sending him money to build schools and better homes for the colored children. . . A great sea of black faces swam before him, smiling wistfully at him. . .sweet, plaintive voices called to him —"Come to us! Come to your own people!"

Then he woke up, and there he was, warm and safe and cosy beside Mammy. He patted her arm until she stirred in her sleep.

"Wha's de matter, Honey bubble?"

"Mammy, we'-all mus' git up early!"

"Kaze why, chile?"

"Kaze we gwine to Alabam' whar de colored folks is!"

Mammy gathered him into her arms in great smothering hug. "Now, den, I cert'ny is erbleege, good Lawd!" she said, fervently. "Dis blessed lamb done hyar de call ob his race!"

THE END.

To Whom It May Concern:

"PICKANINNY," by ESTELLE MARGARET SWEARINGEN, a story of remarkable interest and originality, full of humor and pathos, holds the attention from the first chapter to the last word. All children love it. One little fellow was heard pleading with his teacher, "Please read Pickaninny out of the cellar before we go home."

Sincerely,

MRS. LOUISE GAVIGAN,

Principal, Bret Harte School,

Sacramento, Calif.

DUFFIELD AND COMPANY
211 E. 19th St. NEW YORK

PICKANINNY

A LITTLE darkey boy came to the teacher of his school in a small Western city one day and said "Teacher, please read dat book out loud again 'cause dey's pickin' on me and if you read 'dat dey stops." " 'Dat book" was Pickaninny, the story of the ups and down of a little darkey boy at school, so amusing, so kind and so free from either prejudice or sentimentality that it makes for better understanding between children of the different races and between grown ups as well. It is a little masterpiece, finely illustrated by one of the greatest of American illustrators, E. W. Kemble.

"Pickaninny" first appeared in California, where it was at once enthusiastically received, especially by the schools; endorsed by the Board of Public Instruction and placed upon the approved list of books in Sacramento and other counties. Since then it has enjoyed an ever increasing popularity throughout the country. In this new and most attractive edition it should prove irresistable to all little children.

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